

The American Neptune

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THE AMERICAN NEPTUNE

A QUARTERLY JOURNAL OF MARITIME HISTORY



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SALEM, MASSACHUSETTS

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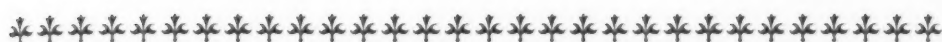
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THE AMERICAN NEPTUNE

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STATEMENT OF THE OWNERSHIP, MANAGEMENT, AND CIRCULATION REQUIRED BY THE ACTS  
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County of Essex

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LEON H. PAULING, *Notary Public*.

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# THE AMERICAN NEPTUNE

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# THE AMERICAN NEPTUNE

*A Quarterly Journal*



*of Maritime History*

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VOLUME XV

JANUARY 1955

NUMBER 1

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**T**HE editorial of our October number, strange as it may seem to our subscribers who received it over two months late, was written before Hazel, third of our autumn hurricane trinity, left the southern Atlantic states and Chesapeake Bay reeling and tore its way across Pennsylvania and New York to Upper Canada.

Each of our NEPTUNE editorial delegation in the afflicted area took his allotted amounts of wind and water. Each was impressed, as we in New England were a few weeks earlier, on how much our lives today are at the mercies of electric current.

Down in Newport Alec Brown's driveway was strewn with trees and his garage landed three hundred feet from its foundation, upside down in the middle of a pond. At Cambridge, Maryland, Brewington and Chapelle lost scores of trees and shingles, and Chapelle's garage also took off. The high tide missed flooding Brewington's house by a scant inch. There was no light, water, or phone for days. The road to town was blocked for over a week and they had to drive through a bean field to get around the fallen trees and wires.

We must offer our apologies to our patient subscribers for the unusual delay in the October number. Circumstances combined to make it unavoidable. A key article arriving very late, making up the annual index, and an overload of work at the press was too much. Finally it went

into the mail at the peak of the Christmas mailing. Because of the index the last number of the year is frequently a little overdue anyway. This one made a record.

Despite the delay in the last number, I think our subscribers will rejoice with us that we have just completed the most successful year financially since the late war. This was due to the Colonial Society grant announced a year ago and also to the remarkable sale of back numbers of the journal during the past year. Evidently many institutions and even more individuals are completing their sets. The sale of back numbers in 1954 was double those sold in 1953. The immediate result of this success is sixteen more pages in this number than in the January issue of a year ago.

News items include an announcement from Edouard A. Stackpole, curator of the Mystic Historical Association, that a course to be known as the Frank C. Munson Seminar in Maritime History will be held at Mystic from 11 July to 13 August 1955. The five-week course is intended 'to bring out the importance of maritime activities in the United States from Colonial times to the present, and to show the impact of such maritime pursuits on the character, economy and political beliefs of the American people.' Professor Robert G. Albion, who holds the Gardiner Chair in Oceanic History at Harvard, is heading the faculty which will include specialists in the several fields of maritime history and economics. Those interested in more detailed information concerning the seminar should write Mr. Stackpole at Mystic, Connecticut.

Congratulations are in order to our fellow editor, Marion V. Brewington. On 13 December he assumed charge of the maritime collections of the Maryland Historical Society in Baltimore. As he is the outstanding authority on Chesapeake Bay maritime history it is difficult to imagine a more appropriate appointment.

ERNEST S. DODGE

Peabody Museum of Salem

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## *Maritime Superstitions of the Arabs*

BY RICHARD LeBARON BOWEN, JR.\*

### I

PAINTING 'eyes,' known as *oculi*, on the bows of boats is a widespread custom among mariners and fishermen in the Old World from the Mediterranean to China. Painted or carved eyes were originally symbolic of a deity looking out watchfully over the sea. Later in many areas *oculi* came to be regarded as mere amulets against misfortune and the evil eye, while in some places it is simply a decoration put there from habit or imitation. The start of Islam in the seventh century A.D. and the Prophet's prohibition of the representation of the human figure or any part of it caused the *oculus* to vanish in many areas both in the Mediterranean and the Indian Ocean wherever Moslem influence became dominant.

Thus we find the *oculus* cult thriving on the east coast of India among the Hindus, while on the west coast where Moslem influence has been strong, the *oculus* is nonexistent. There is a continuation of the use of the *oculus* from India to Burma, and from the Gulf of Siam to China, but in Indonesia and the Malay Peninsula it has disappeared wherever Islam has spread; only in Hindu Bali do we find it prevalent. It has been generally assumed that this practice was extinct in Arabia proper, with the exception of a few minor occurrences.

\* The writer is indebted to Mr. Wendell Phillips, president of the American Foundation for the Study of Man, for making this study possible, since most of the material on the eye designs found on Arab dhows was gathered firsthand along the South Arabian coast in 1950 while the author was a member of the Foundation's Arabian Expedition. While it has been known for years that eyes have been placed on boats of certain areas all over the world, it has never been realized how common their use is by some of the Arabs of South Arabia. The discovery of the frequent use of eyes on certain Arab dhows completes the distribution picture of these devices in the Indian Ocean, and has enabled the author to propose a new theory for the introduction of boat eyes into the Indian Ocean.

The author is also grateful to Prof. W. F. Albright, vice-president of the Foundation, for assistance in the work, and thanks are extended to Dr. B. Segall of the Foundation for valuable aid. The writer is also very grateful to Mrs. H. R. P. Dickson, Prof. G. F. Hourani, Prof. P. K. Hitti, and Dr. Richard Ettinghausen for collaborating on certain parts of this study.

## 6 MARITIME SUPERSTITIONS OF THE ARABS

Discussing the boat oculi of the Indo-Pacific region, Hornell stated that

In passing from the Mediterranean to the Indo-Pacific Ocean, we find no trace of the oculus either in the Red Sea or the Persian Gulf. Here, in the home waters of the Arabs, the precepts of the Koran are most strictly observed; no craft, whether it be the stately *baggala* or the workaday *sambuk*, ever shows any suggestion of an oculus. The Prophet's behest forbidding representation of the human figure, or its parts, is obeyed in letter and in spirit. It is only when the Swaheli coast is reached that the oculus is again encountered.<sup>1</sup>

In a later work Hornell modified this statement as follows: 'A few notable occurrences of eyes in Arab-influenced localities are found elsewhere. The *sambuk* of the Red Sea and the East Coast of Africa sometimes has a rude eye painted upon the stemhead.'<sup>2</sup> It is quite obvious that Hornell was not familiar with the Gulf of Aden, for these waters are virtually alive with dhows decorated with oculi.

One of the most primitive crafts of the Swaheli coast of East Africa is the now-extinct *mtepe*, a double-ended sewn boat. There were conventionalized oculi carved and painted on each side of the stem and the sternpost. Besides the *mtepe*, many of the smaller craft of Zanzibar and Pemba are decorated with oculi at both bow and stern. Hornell has shown illustrations of the method of decorating these local craft with oculi (Fig. 1).<sup>3</sup> In addition to the *dau*, *ngalawa*, and dinghy illustrated, Hornell shows a photograph of a transom-sterned *jehazi* with bow ornamentation identical to that of the *dau* shown (Fig. 1-E). On double-ended craft the oculus was always found at both bow and stern; in boats with transom sterns the oculus was sometimes found on the transom, sometimes not. Usually the oculus was on a green triangular patch when on the bow; on double-ended craft oculi were found on green triangles at both bow and stern.

In addition to the oculi found on the East African coast, eyes are extensively used in the Gulf of Aden on Arab dhows. At first there seems to be neither rhyme nor reason to the oculi found here, since some of the craft have them on the quarters or the transom in addition to the bows, while others have double and triple oculi at the bow and none on the stern. However, a study of hundreds of craft at Aden has enabled me to make many generalizations.

<sup>1</sup> J. Hornell, 'Boat Oculi Survivals,' *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland*, LXVIII (1938), 343.

<sup>2</sup> J. Hornell, *Water Transport* (Cambridge: University Press, 1946), p. 287.

<sup>3</sup> J. Hornell, 'Boat Oculi Survivals,' *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute*, LXVIII (1938), 344.

One of the most common boats used by the fishermen on the South Arabian coast is a teakwood dugout canoe imported from the Malabar Coast of India and known to the Arabs as *huri*. The Arabs spread the dugout sides and add a broad washstrake to increase the freeboard.<sup>4</sup> The fishermen using these double-ended dugouts keep the hulls oiled with fish oil and haul the craft out of the water whenever they are not fishing. I never saw an oculus or a green triangle on any dugout with raised sides along the South Arabian coast from Aden to Mukalla.

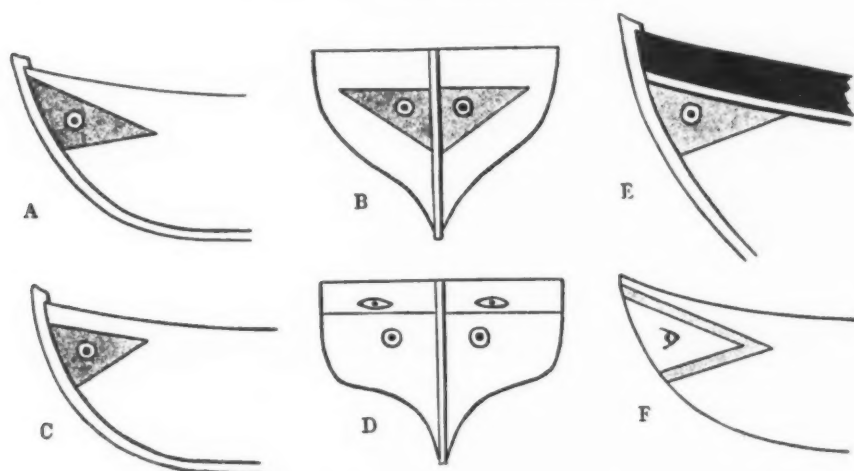


Fig. 1. Oculi found on small Zanzibar craft. (A) Bow of *dau* with an oculus on a green triangle. (B) Sharp stern of A with an oculus on the green triangle on the quarters. (C) Bow of a dinghy with an oculus on the green triangle. (D) Square stern of C showing two pairs of oculi. (E) Bow of a larger *dau* with an oculus on the green triangle. (F) Bow of an outrigger canoe (*ngalawa*) with oculus on a white triangle outlined with green. (After Hornell.)

However, many dugouts without raised sides are used as harbor boats by Aden sailors. These are often painted, and when painted they usually have green triangles with eyes both fore and aft. I saw two of these hulls which had been completely tarred below a white coaming strip. There were oculi in roughly triangular areas marked off with a white line at each end of the black hulls; one hull had double oculi on both ends.<sup>5</sup> Dugouts without raised sides were used at Mukalla as harbor boats and were unpainted without oculi.

<sup>4</sup> For a complete description of the raising of these dugout sides see R. LeB. Bowen, Jr., 'Primitive Watercraft of Arabia,' *AMERICAN NEPTUNE*, XII (1952), 186-221.

<sup>5</sup> For an illustration of these two craft see *ibid.*, Fig. 6.

## 8 MARITIME SUPERSTITIONS OF THE ARABS

Most of the double-ended *zaruks* seen in the Gulf of Aden are owned by Yemenites. There are several small *zaruks* owned at Aden, but apparently there are none above 35 feet in length. I saw several of these small Aden *zaruks* (20 to 30 feet) with green triangles and eyes on each bow and quarter. All *zaruks* from Yemen had green triangles both fore and aft, but never showed a trace of an eye (Fig. 2). A 60-foot *zaruk* I saw rotting on the beach at Aden had an eye on each bow triangle, but none on the stern triangle.

The double-ended *jelbah* almost without exception has green triangles without eyes both fore and aft. However, there is usually a rude eye on the raised stemhead, and the stemhead is invariably painted light blue

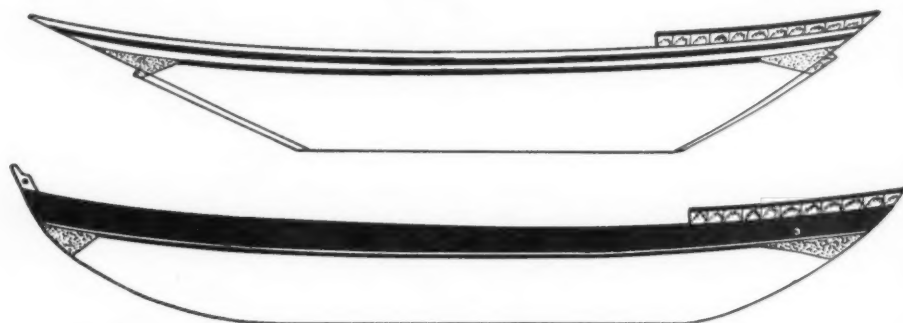


Fig. 2. Decoration of double-ended Yemen craft. Top shows the *zaruk* with small green triangles both fore and aft. There are usually alternating bands of black and white following the sheer line. Bottom shows the *jelbah* also with small green triangles both fore and aft. There is usually a broad brown band following the sheer line. (Original drawing by the author.)

(Fig. 2). This is generally true of all *jelbahs*, whether they are from Aden, Mukalla, or Yemen. This is the only Yemen craft to my knowledge which carries an oculus.

The sewn boat found on the South Arabian coast is mainly used by the fishermen, and like the dugout *huri*, is never painted when used by fishermen. I never saw a green triangle on any of the sewn boats at either Aden or Mukalla, but green triangles are found on some of the sewn boats east of Mukalla at Shihr, as we shall see later. The unpainted sewn boat used by the fishermen sometimes had conventionalized oculi carved on each side of the stem and sternpost, with a Koranic inscription in Arabic often carved on the quarters.<sup>6</sup> Similar conventionalized oculi

<sup>6</sup> For a description of these craft and some of the conventionalized oculi see *ibid.*, p. 201-214.

are also found carved (but not painted) on the sternposts only of the Persian Gulf *bum* and certain craft of Oman (Figs. 5, 7, & 16). The Persian Gulf *bum* oculi designs reproduced in Figure 7 were kindly collected and sent to me by Mrs. H. R. P. Dickson.<sup>7</sup>

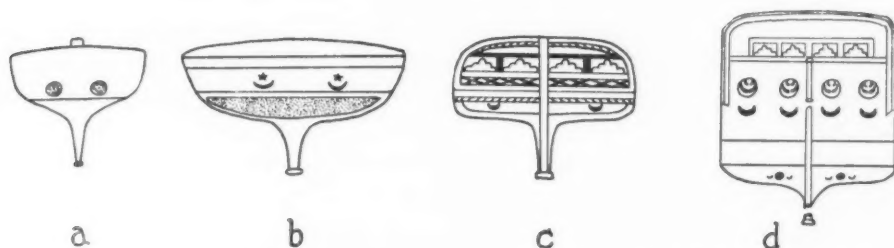


Fig. 3. Oculi found on the square sterns of dhows at Aden. (a) Pair of oculi on small 20-foot *za'imah*. (b & c) Pairs of oculi on the sterns of 25-foot *za'imahs*. (d) Multiple oculi on stern of large 60-foot *sanbuq*. Generally oculi are not found on the sterns of such large *sanbuqs*. The details of the oculi shown in (a) are shown in Fig. 7-o; and the details of the top row of (d) in Fig. 7-i. (Original drawings by the author.)

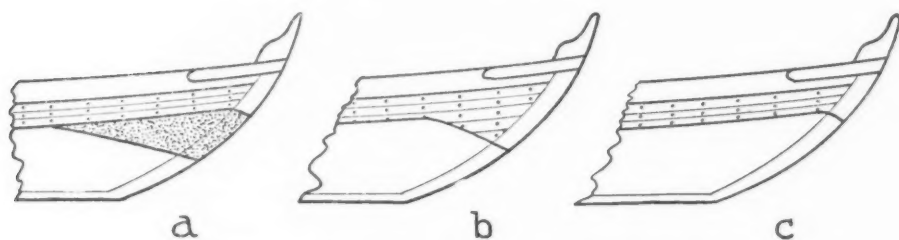


Fig. 4. Degeneration of green triangles as seen on small *buts* and *za'imahs* at Aden. (a) Green triangle without oculus. (b) No green triangle, but the area where it should be is left the same as the topsides. (c) Dip at the stem is all that is left of the green triangle here. (Original drawings by the author.)

The small *za'imahs* and *buts* (up to 30 feet) in Aden usually have a pair of eyes on the transom (Fig. 3) and green triangles without oculi on the bows (Fig. 4). On only one small *za'imah* did I see eyes painted on the green triangles, and in this particular case there was also an eye on the

<sup>7</sup> Mrs. Dickson included a rather sad note on the rapid disappearance of Kuwait watercraft due to the effect of oil, which I quote here: 'Kuwait today is not the Kuwait of yesteryear. A new corniche drive is rapidly driving all our boats away, and the town development is taking all the crews for either pearling boats or "sifr" boats. Kuwaitis will not sail on the long journey to India and Africa with a non-Kuwaiti crew. So many boats have been sold and gone, and sea captains are filling their go-downs with cement instead of sails, ropes, etc. No longer is it easy to step out and get pictures and drawings. All our water *bums* have been sold and many of our ocean-going ones. The few that come into the harbor today are usually dilapidated ones from other parts of the Gulf.'

raised sternhead. Usually these small *za'imahs* and *buts* do not carry eyes on the sternhead.

On some small *buts* and *za'imahs*, however, there are no green triangles; instead, the area where the green triangle should be is painted the same as the topsides, or if the topsides are simply oiled it is likewise oiled (Fig. 4). Thus the waterline dips down at the bow, so that often when the boat is loaded there is a triangular area of the topsides projecting below the water. On others there is just a slight dip as the waterline crosses the stem (Fig. 4).<sup>8</sup>

The 'unpainted triangles' found on some Aden dhows explained something about Persian Gulf *bums* that I had never been able to understand. Above the white limed bottom the *bum* topsides are only oiled, and this is usually bare wood unless recently oiled, since the oil wears off very

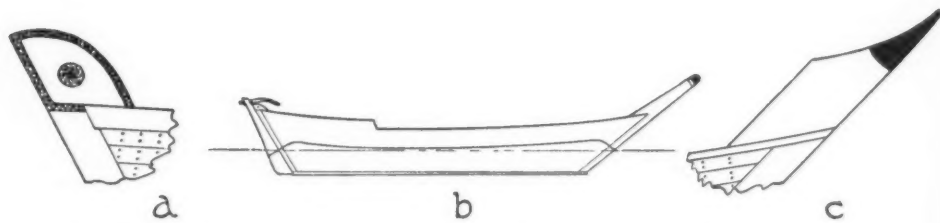


Fig. 5. Details of Persian Gulf craft. (a) Details of the single oculus carved on the raised sternhead of the Persian Gulf *bum* shown in (b). The tip of the elongated sternhead is painted black with a white line below it. Note that the waterline dips down noticeably at each end. (c) Stemhead of Persian Gulf *sanbuq* with the tip painted black.

fast. On many double-ended *bums* the waterline often dipped down at both ends (Fig. 5). A comparison with some Aden craft indicates that this probably represents the final phase in the degeneration of the oculus cult in the Persian Gulf. It is very doubtful whether any Arab sailor today realizes that this unpainted triangular area was once painted green, and that it probably had an eye painted on it. The Persian Gulf mariner simply believes that it is good luck to have the unpainted area, which he probably does not even look upon as a triangle.

On larger *za'imahs* (above 40 feet) and *sanbuqs* from Aden there are usually no eyes on the transom, but there is always an eye on the sternhead which is painted blue. On only a few were there eyes on the green

<sup>8</sup> Actually there is no waterline on Arab dhows in the strict sense, since the division between the topsides and the bottom usually follows the line of sheer, rather than being parallel to the water.

triangles. On many of the large *sanbuqs* there were two and three eyes on each side of the stemhead. On one *sanbuq*, reported to be the largest ever built at Aden, there were four eyes on each side of the stemhead: two crescents and stars and two conventionalized geometric patterns (Fig. 6). It would thus seem that the number of oculi placed on these dhows was done so according to size.

*Sanbuqs* from the African ports of the Gulf of Aden are similarly decorated with oculi on the stemhead and often carry eyes on the green triangle. I saw a peculiar conglomeration of oculi on a 60-foot *sanbuq* from British Somaliland. On the green triangle there was an eye over a crescent, a conventionalized circular eye, and a pistol, while on the stemhead there was a carved five-pointed geometric design in a circle. The transom was highly decorated with lions, seagulls, automobiles, and

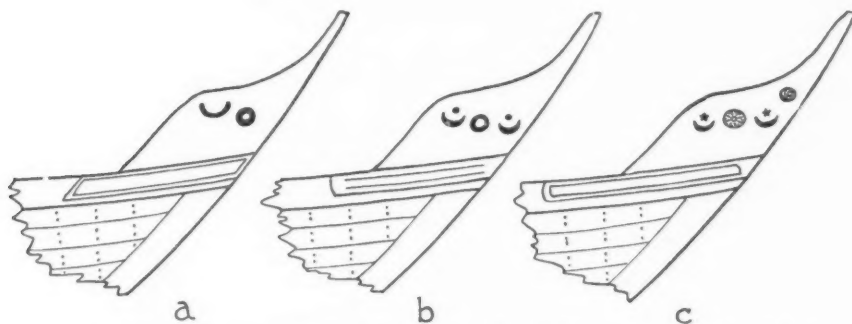


Fig. 6. Multiple oculi on the stemheads of large *sanbuqs* at Aden. (a & b) On 60- to 80-foot *sanbuqs*. (c) On 127-foot *sanbuq*, supposedly the largest *sanbuq* ever built in Aden.

chickens in vivid colors. Mukalla *sanbuqs* usually have a green triangle without an eye and a single eye on the blue stemhead.

There is little similarity in the actual form of the oculi found on dhows in the Gulf of Aden, except that most of them are painted white. The simplest form of oculus is a plain circular dot, which is found on the stemheads of many *za'imahs*, *sanbuqs*, and *jelbahs* (Fig. 7); occasionally on Aden *za'imahs* and *sanbuqs* the oculus consisted of a simple ring. In a few instances I noticed that a wide ring was carved on the stemhead of new *za'imahs* and *sanbuqs* at Aden; I was not able to see many oculi close enough to determine whether or not they were carved under the painting.

A very common oculus on Aden dhows was a dot placed over a crescent with the horns upturned; occasionally the dot was replaced by a five-pointed star (Fig. 6). On a 60-foot Mukalla *sanbuq* there were two cres-

cents and a star in a row on the stemhead and a crescent beside a cross on the green triangle.

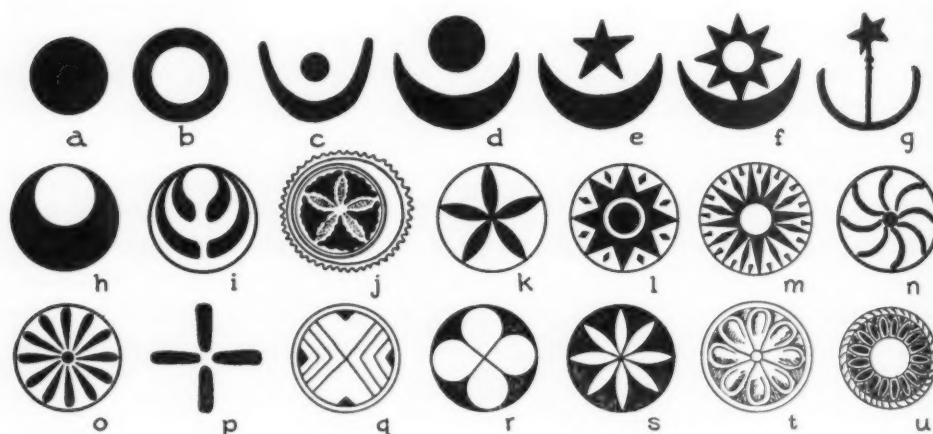


Fig. 7. Forms of oculi and similar devices. (a) A common form of oculus found in Aden, usually painted in white on the stemheads of *jelbahs*, *za'imahs*, and *sanbuqs*. (b) Another common oculus found at Aden in place of the dot. The center is not colored, and the ring is usually white. (c) Ancient South Arabian lunisolar device from a pre-Christian marble slab from the excavations of the American Foundation for the Study of Man in Beihan. (d) Similar device used as an oculus at Aden. (e) Crescent and star device used as an oculus at Aden and also in Portugal. (f) Crescent and star ornament in plaster (the circle is a hole) seen at the top of a fountain in a public square at Mukalla. (g) Crescent and star ornament on the top of a 'Jingling Johnny' used in religious processions in Yemen; this is not discussed in the text. (h) Closed crescent or peacock eye popular in Turkish art from the sixteenth to eighteenth centuries. The small circle often contained a star or other design. (i) Modified form of peacock eyes found on the stern of the large *sanbuq* shown in Fig. 3-d. (j) Modified peacock eye found at the bow and stern of certain East African *mtapes*. (k, l, m, n & o) Conventionalized geometric designs used as oculi on dhows at Aden, of which (k) is the most common form. (p) Oculus in the form of a cross found on a Mukalla dhow. (q) Oculus carved on the stem and stern-head of Mukalla sewn boat. (r, s, t & u) Forms of oculi carved on the sternheads only of Persian Gulf *bums*. (Original drawings by the author with the exception of the following: [g] after H. Scott, *In the High Yemen* [London, 1947], p. 167; [j] after Hornell; [r, s, t & u] drawn by Mrs. H. R. P. Dickson.)

Besides these oculi, there were numerous circular conventionalized forms evident on dhows around Aden. One of the commonest of these was a five-pointed geometric design within a circle. I saw several of these carved on the stemheads of new *sanbuqs* at Aden; the design was outlined by carved lines. There are other similar conventionalized patterns

based on an octagonal division. In one instance I saw a blue fish outlined in white on the bows.

It should be fairly obvious from the foregoing that the general arrangement of oculi is conditioned by whether the craft is double-ended or square-sterned. The double-ended dugout *huris* with raised sides used by the fishermen never have green triangles or oculi. The dugout *huris* used as harbor boats at Aden usually have triangles with eyes on the bows and the quarters; those used as harbor boats at Mukalla are without triangles or eyes. The double-ended sewn boats used by the fishermen never have green triangles, but they do sometimes have carved but unpainted conventionalized oculi on the stem and sternpost. Generally speaking, the double-ended *zaruk* and *jelbah*, which are essentially Yemen craft, have green triangles without eyes at both bow and stern; the *jelbah* usually has a rude circular eye painted on its blue stemhead.

On small transom-sterned boats (less than 30 feet) at Aden there is usually a green triangle without eyes on each side of the bow and a pair of oculi on the transom. However, many of these small square-ended boats do not have any green triangles painted on, but the area where the triangle should be is painted the same as the topsides. On the large square-sterned dhows there are usually green triangles on the bows without eyes, and there is invariably an eye on the blue stemhead, but there are seldom eyes on the transom.

## II

In considering the possible origin of the oculi found on the east coast of Africa, Hornell came to the conclusion that they must be of Indonesian origin, since:

- (1) the duplication of the oculi on the quarters as well as on the bows of the Zanzibar and Comoro Islands vessels is paralleled nowhere in the world except on the ninth century sculptured ships of Boro Budur in Java, and the elegant double-ended craft of the Botel Tobago islanders;
- (2) migrations of Indonesians from Sumatra and Java to Madagascar occurred during the first millennium of our era.<sup>9</sup>

It is very difficult to see how Hornell could make this first statement with a clear conscience, since fifteen years previously in the same journal he had presented about half a dozen examples of the duplication of oculi, or devices of similar significance, on the stern or quarters as well as on the bow.<sup>10</sup> Hornell cited the following examples:

<sup>9</sup> J. Hornell, 'Boat Oculi Survivals,' *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute*, LXVIII (1938), 346.

<sup>10</sup> J. Hornell, 'Survival of the Use of Oculi in Modern Boats,' *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute*, LIII (1923), 289-321.

# 14 MARITIME SUPERSTITIONS OF THE ARABS

- (1) The *masula* boats of the Madras coast of India usually have oculi placed on the bows, and in a few instances have a second pair of eyes placed on the quarters.<sup>11</sup>
- (2) The canoes of British Columbia often had totemistic eyes at both ends along with the mass of other totemistic decoration usually covering the hull.<sup>12</sup>
- (3) At Palermo in Sicily a few of the boats were decorated with circular oculi at both the bow and the stern.<sup>13</sup>
- (4) At Termini Imerse in Sicily small red disks were placed on both the stern and the bow.<sup>14</sup>
- (5) At Catania in Sicily the bows of boats were usually decorated with figures of saints in addition to oculi, while more figures of saints are painted on the stern quarters.<sup>15</sup>
- (6) In some areas in both Sicily and Italy a horn-shaped or a horseshoe device is often placed on the stern quarters.<sup>16</sup>

While these last two are not strictly oculi, the first four certainly are. In addition to these, Hornell showed an illustration of a three-masted Indian boat from the Palk Straits with four-pointed geometric star ornaments at each end.<sup>17</sup>

Although Hornell related that oculi were found at Madagascar, one of the examples he cited was on a *jehazi* from Zanzibar and the other was a crude oculus on the bow of a plank-built coaster.<sup>18</sup> He also stated that never was there a sign of an oculus on the outrigger canoes of Madagascar which were generally used for fishing, and he showed that in the Comoro Islands no oculi were found on the outrigger canoes of either Johanna or Anjouan Islands. Only at Mayotte, the island nearest to Madagascar, was the oculus found, and here on both large outrigger sailing canoes and small outrigger dugouts. In all these Mayotte cases the oculi were found on both the bows and the quarters.

It is now an accepted fact that the double outrigger canoes of Madagascar,<sup>19</sup> the Comoro Islands, and East Africa are of Indonesian origin. If the oculus complex were actually Indonesian, is it not strange that the majority of the outrigger canoes of proven Indonesian origin in this part

<sup>11</sup> Ibid., p. 290.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid., p. 299.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid., p. 311.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid., p. 308.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid., p. 316.

<sup>17</sup> J. Hornell, 'Origins and Ethnological Significance of Indian Boat Designs,' *Memoirs of the Asiatic Society of Bengal*, VII (1920), Fig. 9, p. 163.

<sup>18</sup> J. Hornell, 'Boat Oculi Survivals,' *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute*, LXVIII (1938), 346.

<sup>19</sup> Only on the west coast of Madagascar is the single outrigger found in this area, and it is probable that it is a rather recent introduction from either India or Indonesia. See R. LeB. Bowen, Jr., 'Twentieth Century Parallelisms of the Double Canoe and the Double Outrigger,' *AMERICAN NEPTUNE*, XII (1952), 306-308.

of the Indian Ocean are without oculi? Even on the East African coast the oculus is not found as consistently on double outriggers as it is on plank-built boats, which can be shown to be of Arab origin.

It is certainly more than a coincidence that the present distribution of triangles with oculi on them corresponds almost exactly with the distribution of the Arab lateen sail. Like the lateen, the spread of oculi down the East African coast and over to the Comoro Islands can only be due to the Arabs: actually the Comoro Islands are today settled by a hybrid population composed of Madagascans of probable Indonesian origin mixed with Arabic-speaking people.<sup>20</sup>

The form of oculus found at Mayotte can be shown to be a very inter-



Fig. 8. Origin of design found on double outrigger of Mayotte. (a) Design of Javanese vessel. (b) Design from the bow of a Mayotte outrigger canoe. Note that the line and the two oculi could have been derived from the scroll design of (a). (c & d) Further modification and simplification of Mayotte oculi designs. (Original drawings by the author from photographs and sketches published by Hornell.)

esting degeneration of an original Javanese design influenced by the Arab oculus. In Figure 8 I have shown a sketch of the prow of a Javanese boat drawn from a photograph by Hornell,<sup>21</sup> alongside a sketch of the prow of a Mayotte canoe also published by Hornell.<sup>22</sup> It can be seen that the oculi on the bows of large Mayotte canoes take the place of the curved ends of the reverse scrolls of the original Indonesian prototype. The designs on the smaller canoes are a further degeneration of the original design, so that the eyebrow actually represents the original reverse scroll

<sup>20</sup> J. Hornell, *Water Transport* (Cambridge: University Press, 1946), p. 246.

<sup>21</sup> J. Hornell, 'Indonesian Influence on East African Culture,' *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute*, LXIV (1934), Plate XLI, Fig. 2.

<sup>22</sup> J. Hornell, 'Boat Oculi Survivals,' *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute*, LXVIII (1938), 341.

(Fig. 8-c & d). This same type of scroll is found on some of the Boro Budur sculptures, so there is no question of its ancient origin. Hornell would have the sinuous white line (Fig. 8-c) a highly conventionalized eyebrow,<sup>23</sup> but such does not seem to be the case.

Hornell speaks of the use of oculi in India in ancient times,<sup>24</sup> referring to the Ajanta cave frescos of Hyderabad: 'Among these are depicted a three-masted ship and a royal barge, both provided with eyes on the bows' (Fig. 9). As a reference he gives Mookerji's *Indian Shipping*;<sup>25</sup> here again Hornell has preferred to ignore the duplication of the oculus at the stern of the royal barge, for eyes are clearly shown at both ends. The

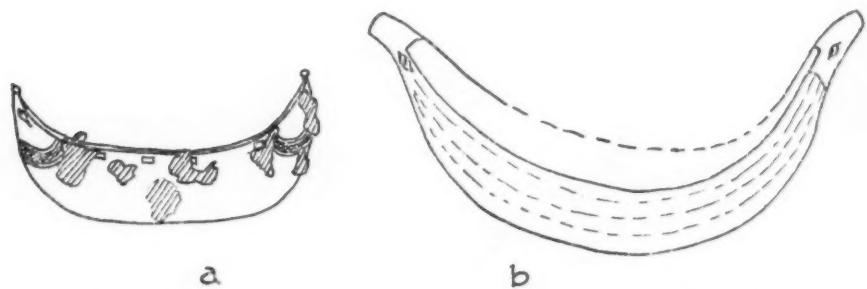


Fig. 9. Ajanta boats of seventh century showing oculi. (a) Hull of three-masted Ajanta ship showing definite triangles at both bow and stern, with an oculus on the bow triangle. The masts, sails, and rigging have been omitted, and only the hull shown. The cross-hatched areas show where the paint has chipped off, and indicate that very probably there was an eye at the stern too. (Original drawing by the author from a photograph published by G. F. Hourani, *Arab Seafaring*.) (b) Hull of Ajanta pleasure barge showing oculi at both bow and stern. People and deck fittings have been omitted for clarity. (Original drawing by the author from a sketch published by R. Mookerji, *Indian Shipping*.)

three-masted ship probably had eyes at each end also; at least it had white triangles at each end. On the bow triangle there is an oculus; the paint is chipped off at the stern where the stern oculus should be, but there is little reason to doubt that there was originally an oculus there.

It would perhaps seem that Hornell cooked the evidence to fit a theory, rather than evolving a theory from an analysis of *all* the evidence. The very strange part of the situation is that Hornell alone has provided

<sup>23</sup> Ibid., p. 345.

<sup>24</sup> J. Hornell, 'Survival of the Use of Oculi in Modern Boats,' *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute*, LIII (1923), 298.

<sup>25</sup> R. Mookerji, *Indian Shipping* (Bombay: Longmans, Green & Co., 1912), pp. 40-42.

practically all the evidence which disproves his theory that the Indonesians developed the use of oculi at both ends of vessels and spread it to East Africa in their wanderings. Since we have examples of oculi on both ends of double-ended craft in India in the seventh century, fully two centuries before the Boro Budur sculptures, there is no necessity to look as far as Indonesia for the origin of the oculi found along the western borders of the Indian Ocean.

The evidence presented here for the Gulf of Aden and the Persian Gulf shows that at one time triangles with oculi were found almost con-

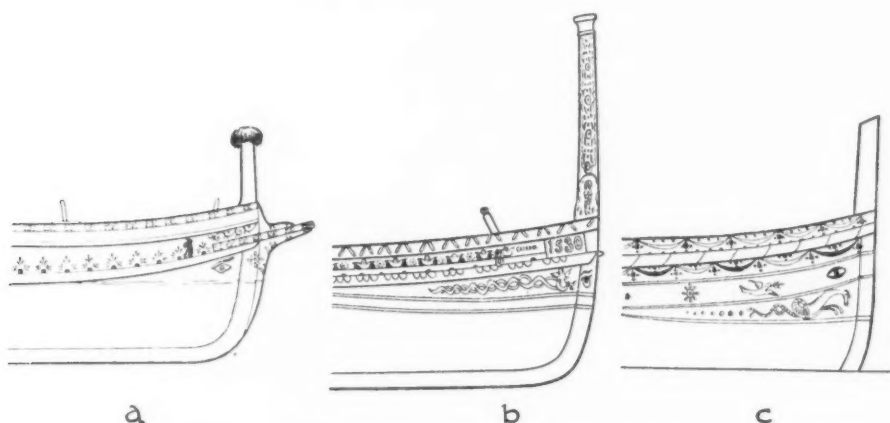


Fig. 10. Forms of triangles and oculi seen on boats of Sicily. (a) An oculus on a triangular area seen on a fishing boat of Syracuse. Note the mop-like decoration on the stemhead, which probably is symbolic of a human head, although today that fact is not realized by the people who place it there. (b) Triangle with oculus and other designs on fishing boat of Catania. On the lower part of the stemhead is depicted the heroine saint of Catania, Santa Agatha. (c) Oculus above a red triangle on a fishing boat of Palermo, with a mythological sea-horse painted on the triangle. The figure of the Madonna is often painted on the tall sternpost. (After Hornell.)

tinuously along the western shore of the Indian Ocean from East Africa to India. Since the occurrence of triangles at both ends of double-ended craft is confined to the western Indian Ocean, we are justified in looking for the origin of the triangle-and-oculus complex in this area.

Triangular areas with oculi or other designs on them also occur today in the Mediterranean and parts of Europe. In both Portugal and Sicily we find boats with oculi on triangular areas on the bows. In Sicily the triangle, which originally must have run up to the gunwale, has been

reduced to a wedge-shaped area by the elaborate decoration which has developed along the gunwale (Fig. 10).<sup>26</sup> In most places in the West the triangles are found on the bows of square-sterned vessels and are elaborately decorated, either with figures or geometric designs. The Portuguese *saveiro* has highly decorated triangles with white fields at each end.<sup>27</sup> Hornell relates that 'On the Seine and the Rhone, and elsewhere

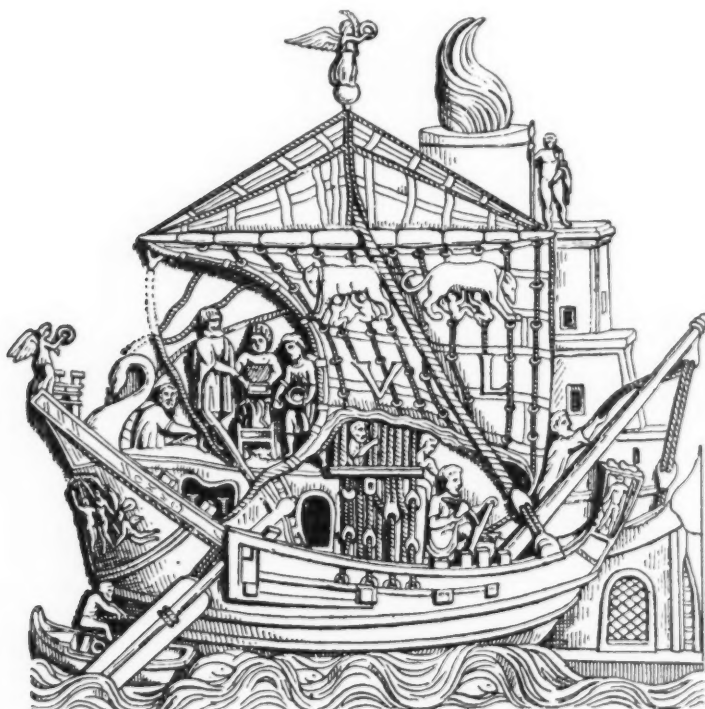


Fig. 11. Second-century A.D. Roman merchantman showing a triangular area at the stern decorated with three figures. Note also the figure on the stemhead, the shrine to Isis at the stern with Isis above it, and the figure at the masthead. (After Torr.)

in France and in Belgium, the canal barges and steam tugs in very many cases have a great coloured triangle . . . on each bow.'<sup>28</sup> Certain British

<sup>26</sup> J. Hornell, 'Survival of the Use of Oculi in Modern Boats,' *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute*, LIII (1923), Figs. 18 & 21.

<sup>27</sup> T. C. Lethbridge, *Boats and Boatmen* (London: Thames & Hudson, 1952), Plate IV, p. 65.

<sup>28</sup> J. Hornell, 'Survival of the Use of Oculi in Modern Boats,' *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute*, LIII (1923), 320.

and Dutch boats are also known to have had triangular areas painted in a similar manner at the bow.<sup>29</sup>

Similar decorations were known in Roman times. In some of the large merchantmen of the second century A.D. elaborately decorated triangular areas are shown on the stern (Fig. 11);<sup>30</sup> this area is just below a shrine to the goddess Isis. Decorated triangular areas were also known at each end of smaller craft in Roman times as shown by one of the Porto Fluviale wall paintings (Fig. 12).<sup>31</sup>

Since it was customary to decorate both ends of ancient Egyptian funeral barges with somewhat similar triangular areas, it seems that the idea of decorating the ends of boats undoubtedly originated in Egypt. Apparently the Greeks did not decorate the ends of their boats in such a

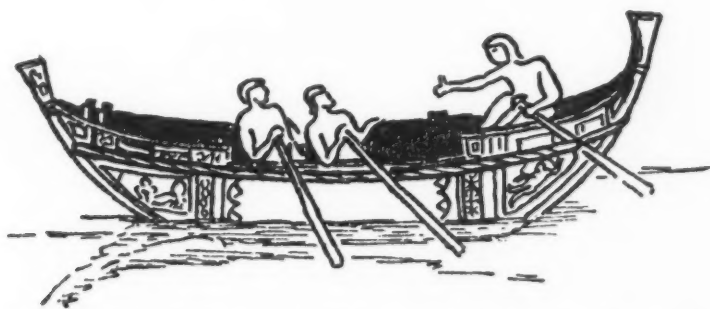


Fig. 12. Small Roman craft from the Porto Fluviale wall paintings showing triangles with figures both at bow and stern. (After Lethbridge.)

manner, although they did use oculi on the bows of their vessels. Since we know that the Romans did decorate the ends of their boats, it is logical to suppose that they are responsible for the introduction of this practice into the Indian Ocean.

Greco-Roman trade began in the Indian Ocean late in the second century B.C. Rome captured Egypt from the Ptolemies about the middle of the first century B.C. and followed the Ptolemy policy of maritime expansion in the Indian Ocean. Greco-Roman trade with India flourished in the first and second centuries A.D., but was practically nonexistent in the third century, since there is an almost complete absence of Roman coins in India after about 215 A.D. Judging from the vast amounts of Roman

<sup>29</sup> T. C. Lethbridge, *op. cit.*, p. 130.

<sup>30</sup> C. Torr, *Ancient Ships* (Cambridge: University Press, 1895), Fig. 29, Plate 6.

<sup>31</sup> T. C. Lethbridge, *op. cit.*, Fig. 8, p. 41.

coins of the first and second centuries found in India, we may suppose that the Romans had colonies in India. Thus it would seem that the oculus cult in the western Indian Ocean was started by Roman colonists in India in the first and second centuries A.D. The Indians also borrowed the Roman bow spritsail set on an *artemon* mast, as is well shown by one of the Ajanta frescos.<sup>32</sup>

Many of the triangular areas found on Western boats have red fields. At Palermo in Sicily the triangle is usually painted red,<sup>33</sup> as are those of Malta.<sup>34</sup> In France and Belgium the large bow triangles are usually paint-

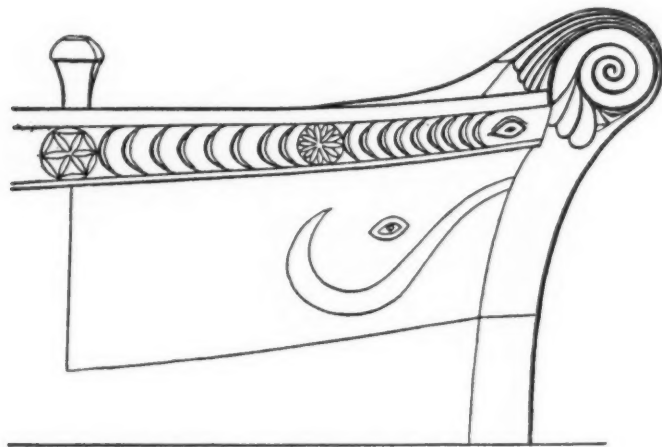


Fig. 13. Kistna-Godaveri canal boat showing red rectangular patch at the bow with an oculus and curved line under it. The rest of the hull is painted black. Note the oculus and two circular designs at the gunwale, and the coiled end of the stemhead. (After Hornell.)

ed red.<sup>35</sup> Hornell relates that on Malta when there is mourning in a family due to the death of a prominent member,<sup>36</sup> the red of the triangle is replaced by black or by dark blue. It is thus extremely pertinent that the bow patches in India (some are rectangular, others triangular) are either red or black. This is certainly strong evidence in favor of a Roman origin.

<sup>32</sup> For an illustration of this ship see R. LeB. Bowen, Jr., 'Eastern Sail Affinities,' *AMERICAN NEPTUNE*, XIII (1953), Fig. 20, p. 193.

<sup>33</sup> J. Palermo, 'Survival of the Use of Oculi in Modern Boats,' *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute*, LIII (1923), 312.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 314.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 320.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 314.

Hornell is satisfied that all the oculi designs found in Eastern seas originated in India,<sup>37</sup> from whence he supposes that the oculi spread to Indonesia, the Indonesians later carrying it to East Africa. Hornell suggests that the oculus was brought to India directly by Egyptian immigrants sometime in the early second millenium B.C.<sup>38</sup> As evidence for this he cites the oculi found on the Kistna-Godaveri canal boats (Fig. 13) and the Madras boats. Both have the oculi on red patches, those of the Kistna-Godaveri boats being always rectangular.

Hornell shows that there is often a strange curved line associated with these oculi. He shows that the orientation of some of these lines in relation to the oculus bears an amazing resemblance to the sacred eye of the sun god shown in ancient Egyptian art. He further shows that the other modifications could be produced by moving this line forward (Fig. 14).



Fig. 14. Egyptian sun god eye and modern Indian forms of oculi. (a) Eye of the Egyptian sun god Ra. (b) Part of eye design from Madras (India) *masula* boats. (c, d & e) Variations in the Kistna-Godaveri oculus shown in Fig. 13. (Modified from material published by Hornell.)

As corroborative evidence for an ancient Egyptian origin of Indian oculi, Hornell states that the shaped log rafts of the east coast of India are derived directly from Egyptian reed rafts. As a source for this sweeping statement Hornell refers to a four-page article which he wrote some time earlier.<sup>39</sup> However, no evidence is presented in this article to substantiate this statement, and no evidence has been presented since. Therefore we must assume that the catamarans of India evolved from reed rafts which diffused to other areas in ancient times from Egypt. While a degeneration of the oculus from an original Egyptian prototype such as Hornell suggests is possible, the weight of the surrounding evidence favors a Roman origin.

In both the Madras *masula* and the Kistna-Godaveri cases the oculi are found on red patches. It is certainly more than fortuitous that red areas

<sup>37</sup> Ibid., p. 300.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid., pp. 300-302.

<sup>39</sup> J. Hornell, 'Catamarans and Reed Rafts,' *Man in India*, I (1921), 144-148.

are painted on the bows of boats in India, as well as in the Mediterranean and Europe, in view of the fact that Roman influence was strong in both areas. In addition to this, the Kistna-Godaveri boats all have a Roman-type stemhead, ending in a coiled pattern. The decorations of this particular boat have undergone considerable evolution, for the original bow triangle evolved into a rectangle, and the coiled stemhead is considerably different from the original Roman forms. In view of these changes it is easy to see how a scroll or any other design could be altered by natural evolution over several thousand years so that its original form could not be recognized. The complex of the red field, the oculus and the coiled stemhead together would seem to form conclusive evidence for the Roman origin of the Indian oculus.

Roman vessels called at the ancient South Arabian ports of Muza, Ocelis, and Eudaemon Arabia, so that the Arabs could have derived the practice of placing triangles and oculi at both ends of their boats from the Romans. Or the custom could have been introduced by the Indians, who undoubtedly had quarters in the large Arab seaports just as they do today. One fact is certain, however; the Arabians changed the color of the triangular area when they started decorating their boat ends, and used green. Green is found nowhere else outside of South Arabia and East Africa (excepting one example on a Malay model).<sup>40</sup>

Inasmuch as the Arabs of Yemen maintained control of parts of the East African coast from pre-Christian times,<sup>41</sup> it seems that it must have been the Arabs rather than the Indonesians who were responsible for the spread of the triangle-and-oculus cult down from the East African coast and over to the Comoro Islands. The fact that the East African oculi are found on green triangles is strong corroborative evidence for an Arab origin.

Originally there was no intention of making a *triangular* area; the whole end of the boat below the gunwale was simply painted a different color from the rest. This is shown in both the Roman boats mentioned above: in the small boat at both ends (Fig. 12) and by the large merchantman at the stern (Fig. 11). The gunwale above this area was usually decorated differently from that below it. The Ajanta ship (Fig. 9) also shows this pure form; the triangles are apparently white with a narrow white gunwale above. This form still persists in many areas. The Portuguese *saveiro* has decorated areas at both ends running up to the narrow white

<sup>40</sup> J. Hornell, 'Survival of the Use of Oculi in Modern Boats,' *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute*, LIII (1923), 298.

<sup>41</sup> The *Periplus*, written in the middle of the first century A.D., relates that Rhapta, a town on the East African coast, was governed by Yemen 'under some ancient right.'

gunwale. Some of the small Portuguese transom-sterned fishing boats have a plain white area on the bow with a single oculus. The bow decorations of France, Belgium, Holland and England also cover the whole end. In the Indian Ocean, the triangle runs up to the gunwale on the smaller East African craft (Fig. 1) and on some of the Ganges boats of India (Fig. 15).

In many areas there has been a degeneration or a natural modification of the decoration of the boats so that the original triangular area has been considerably modified. We have already seen that in India in one instance the triangular area was modified over the years to a rectangle. It is easy to see how this change took place by looking at the bow of the

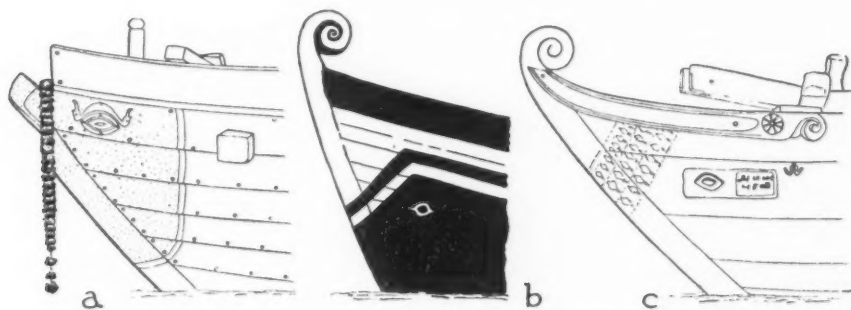


Fig. 15. Boats of India and Ceylon showing triangles and oculi. (a) Bow of a Ganges cargo boat with a brass oculus nailed on a black area painted on the bow. A garland of flowers hangs from the stemhead. (b) Bow of Jaffna *dhoni* of Ceylon showing oculus on the black hull, and white triangular area left forward. (c) Bow of Point Calimere (South India) *dhoni* showing oculus and dedication to local goddess carved on hull, with three series of figures of the sacred chank shell painted in yellow representing votive garlands. (After Hornell.)

Ganges boat (Fig. 15): the line marking off the triangular area drops vertically from the gunwale, and then curves out horizontally towards the bow. Over the years the horizontal line became elongated until a rectangle was obtained (Fig. 13). Rectangles with oculi are also found in the Gulf of Siam and in the China Seas.

In another type of modification, the original decoration of the gunwale was extended downward so that there was a broad band following the line of the sheer. As this decoration expanded inch by inch the triangular areas at each end of the vessels were forced downward. This is shown in the Mediterranean by the boats of Sicily (Fig. 10). It is also seen on all the boats of South Arabia. The double-ended boats of Yemen have

a series of broad multicolored bands running the length of the boat. The eyeless green triangle has been forced down and has also shrunk in size so that in some cases it is but vestigial (Fig. 2). The sides of the square-sterned Zanzibar *jehazi* are similarly decorated with a single bow triangle below multicolored bands. The sides of the vessels from Aden are usually not painted above the waterline, but are simply oiled. However, the green triangle is always found beneath the oiled topsides on the larger vessels.

There is just one weak link in a hypothesis of a Roman origin of the triangle-and-oculus found in the western Indian Ocean. To the best of my knowledge there are no examples in Roman art showing a plain triangle with oculus on it at each end of a boat. Moll shows a beautiful Roman vessel of the first century A.D. with a huge eye at the stern and the name 'Isis' near it.<sup>42</sup> However, since there are only a few examples showing decorated triangular areas, we may suppose that the plain triangle with an eye was passed over for more artistic material. The fact that today in the Mediterranean the highly decorated triangles and the plain triangles with oculi exist side by side would seem to show a common origin.

Hornell argues for a Greek origin of the oculus found on the boats of Sicily and other places in the Mediterranean,<sup>43</sup> and he suggests that many are the direct result of Greek colonists. I must disagree with this view strongly; a triangle is never shown on boats in Greek art, but we have several examples of it in Roman art. Hornell has failed to see the significance of the triangle occurring on the boats of both the West and the East. It is this triangle which shows the common Roman origin of all such designs. This design has been spread from England to China by the Roman Empire.

### III

After Roman shipping left the Indian Ocean in the third century A.D., or shortly after, this ocean was free of Western influence for about thirteen centuries. The explosive arrival of the Portuguese in Eastern waters in 1497 again brought a mixing of the maritime customs of East and West, although this time it does not appear to have been appreciable so far as oculi and similar superstitions are concerned. While the Portuguese ships and boats undoubtedly carried oculi and triangles somewhat similar to many found in the Indian Ocean, there can be no doubt as to

<sup>42</sup> F. Moll, *Das Schiff in der bildenden Kunst* (Bonn, 1929), Plate B XI b-96.

<sup>43</sup> J. Hornell, 'Survival of the Use of Oculi in Modern Boats,' *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute*, LIII (1923), 302-310.

the early origin of most of the oculi found in the Indian Ocean, since these are shown in the seventh-century Ajanta frescos and the eighth- or ninth-century Boro Budur sculptures.

Likewise, the Portuguese could not have copied the idea from the Arabs or the Indians whose triangles were colored green, red, or black, since the Portuguese used mainly white. When the Portuguese voyaged to West Africa in 1455 the natives marveled at the ship, a caravel, and thought the eyes painted on the prow were real eyes by which the ship saw its way through the water.<sup>44</sup> On reaching the Indian Ocean, neither the Portuguese nor the natives of that area could have been surprised at finding eyes on each other's boats and ships.

It seems certain, however, that the rude eye found on the stemhead of many Gulf of Aden and Yemen *sanbuqs* and *jelbahs* is actually of Portuguese origin. While this design is no longer found in the Mediterranean or Portugal, we are very fortunate in having several illustrations of this type of oculus preserved in a fifteenth-century French manuscript (Plate 1).<sup>45</sup> Since this eye design is known to have been used in the West before the Portuguese entered the Indian Ocean, we are justified in attributing its occurrence in the Indian Ocean to the Portuguese. The Arabs probably did not attach any special significance to this eye placed on the stemhead, and probably placed it there only in imitation of the Portuguese as a good luck charm. On the other hand, it seems that the Arabs must be credited with the development of the multiple oculi seen on the stemheads of some of the largest dhows at Aden.

The oculus became extinct in certain Arab-dominated parts of the Indian Ocean, but the arrival of the Portuguese apparently caused a rejuvenation of the practice in some of these areas. This is well illustrated by Yemen: while both the double-ended *zaruk* and *jelbah* have green triangles fore and aft, the triangles never have eyes. It is also interesting to note that the triangles are small in size, having shrunk until they are almost vestigial. The only eye shown on Yemen dhows is the rude eye of Portuguese origin on the raised *jelbah* stemhead. There is no eye on the *zaruk* stemhead because it is cut off along the sheer line (Fig. 2). In other areas, such as on the East African coast and in certain parts of India, the oculus has apparently been in continuous use since pre-Islamic times.

The stronghold of the oculus on the Arabian mainland is at Aden. Here oculi are generally found on the stemheads of *sanbuqs* and they are occasionally found on the green triangle. At the time of the arrival of the

<sup>44</sup> J. Hornell, *Water Transport* (Cambridge: University Press, 1946), p. 287.

<sup>45</sup> The Pierpont Morgan Library, New York, M396, ff. 74r, 96r.

Portuguese, Aden was the administrative capital of the kingdom of Yemen; however, in 1538 the Ottoman Turks seized Aden, which was never to return to the Yemenites. The Turks were essentially landlubbers and relied on European sailors. The ships in their fleet which took Aden in 1538 were designed and built under the supervision of a Genoese naval architect.<sup>46</sup> Aden was long a strong center of resistance against the Portuguese, and it seems that the Arab shipbuilders started building boats (*sanbuqs*) in imitation of Portuguese ships, after the numerous vessels captured by the Arabs at various times. Today the lines of Aden *sanbuqs* are very similar to certain late sixteenth-century Portuguese (or European) ships.

The eyes of the Zanzibar-Comoro Islands area are usually circular dots surrounded by broad rings. Sometimes the ring is white or pale blue and the center is dark blue; at other times the ring is blue and the center white. At Aden either white dots or circles are often used, but with a circle the center is usually not colored (Fig. 7). More common at Aden seems to be a crescent motif, consisting of a dot or a star over a crescent with the horns pointed upwards. There seem to be three possible origins for the crescent motif found on Aden dhows: (1) a legacy from the ancient South Arabians; (2) an importation by the Turks; (3) an importation by the Portuguese.

The crescent moon (on its side with the horns up) surmounted by a sun disk was a very popular religious emblem in ancient South Arabia. This lunisolar device was frequently found in the pre-Christian excavations of the American Foundation for the Study of Man in South Arabia (Fig. 7), and was previously rather well known in ancient South Arabian art.<sup>47</sup> Most scholars regard the crescent and disk as the specific symbols of the moon *god* and the sun *goddess*. Among the Western Semites the moon tended to be masculine and the sun feminine in contrast to the Mesopotamian situation. The sun goddess was universally known as *Shams* in South Arabia, and today *shams* is Arabic for sun. There was a good deal of variation in the names of the moon god. The association of the crescent and the disk apparently reflected the masculine and feminine heads of the pantheon.

It would be tempting to draw the conclusion that the crescent and

<sup>46</sup> G. W. F. Stripling, *The Ottoman Turks and the Arabs, 1511-1574* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1942), p. 90.

<sup>47</sup> Dr. B. Segall of the American Foundation for the Study of Man has informed me that Arabian moon and sun disk symbols are shown in the following: D. Nielsen, *Handbuch der Altarabischen Altertumskunde*, I, 170; H. Bossert, *Altsyrien*, Pl. 373; A. Grohmann, *Gottersymbole auf sud-arabischen Denkmälern*, Denkschriften der Wiener Akademie, Philosophisch-Historische Klasse Vol. 58 (1914), pp. 37 ff.

disk found on Aden dhows today has survived from Roman times. However, the early Moslems quickly and effectively eradicated all such gods and goddesses and their worship. Obviously the reproduction of religious devices symbolic of such deities would have been outlawed. We have seen above that the oculus apparently became extinct in Yemen before the arrival of the Portuguese, and that the green triangles on which it used to be placed had shrunk so as to be almost vestigial. Since Aden was part of Yemen at this time, we must likewise assume that the oculus had been abandoned in Aden. Therefore we must credit the occurrence of the star-and-crescent motif as an oculus at Aden to either the Turks or the Portuguese, both of whom used it.

Strong evidence against the survival from ancient times of the star-and-crescent as an oculus is provided by the craft of East Africa. We have shown that the green triangle with the oculus was spread to East Africa in ancient times by the South Arabians. We have further shown that the form of triangle found on the more primitive of the East African craft is of a purer form than that found in Arabia today, since it covers the whole end of the boat. We must also suppose that the form of oculus is also closer to the original form. This eye is invariably a dot-and-circle form. A star-and-crescent is never found in East Africa, and thus it must be a more recent introduction to Arabia. The only places where the star-and-crescent form of oculi is found today are Portugal, Aden and Mukalla.

In searching for the significance of the crescent, Sakisian points out that the true crescent (with horns open) is absent from all Turkish flags and banners which can be positively dated from the sixteenth to the nineteenth centuries.<sup>48</sup> He then states that it is necessary to go to the end of the eighteenth century to see the crescent united with the star on a red background, adopted the first time as the Turkish flag. The occasion was the organization of a corps of troops by a European in 1793; however, it was not until 1826 that it formally became the Turkish national emblem.

When Sakisian states that the crescent is absent from Turkish banners and flags from the sixteenth to the nineteenth centuries, he is referring specifically to a true crescent resembling a crescent moon with the horns open. Closed crescents were common during this period. It would appear, however, that he had apparently overlooked at least one example, for Dr. Richard Ettinghausen informs me that he knows of a seventeenth-century Turkish flag captured during the unsuccessful siege of Vienna,

<sup>48</sup> A. Sakisian, 'Le Croissant Comme Embleme National et Religieux en Turquie,' *Syria*, XXII (1941), 66-80. I am extremely grateful to Dr. Richard Ettinghausen for pointing out this most valuable reference to me.

which shows, along with other designs, an open crescent with three closed crescents between the upturned horns.

Closed crescents are usually composed of two concentric circles, one smaller than the other and set off center so that the peripheries of the two circles touch (Fig. 7-h), effectively forming a crescent with the two horns just touching. Sakisian relates that the motif is a common element of Turkish art from the sixteenth to the eighteenth centuries,<sup>49</sup> and that the closed crescents are usually repeated three times, just as with the seventeenth-century flag mentioned above. Dr. Ettinghausen has informed me that in books on Islamic art where the design occurs it is referred to as the peacock eye or peacock pattern.

These peacock eyes have actually survived into modern times, for I saw one example of an oculus at Aden on the stern of a large *sanbuq* which can only be a much modified peacock eye (Figs. 3 & 7-i); it was over a crescent and repeated four times. Another such example has been published by Hornell;<sup>50</sup> it occurred on certain *mtepe* at both bow and stern (Fig. 7-j).

In his article Sakisian is attempting to show that the combination of the star and the open crescent did not have any religious or national significance to the Turks before the adoption of the present Turkish flag, suggested by Europeans, at the start of the twentieth century. He shows that in Western manuscripts from as early as the fifteenth century the star-and-crescent, and the star are shown on Turkish flags. He states that this is why Europeans suggested the star-and-crescent for the Turkish flag.

Sakisian implies that the true crescent with open horns was not known to the Turks, and that the Western miniatures showing open crescents are not based on facts. It would seem that the fifteenth-century Western miniatures showing open crescents had been copied from earlier sources perhaps depicting the Crusades. Thus it would appear that the peacock eye is but a stylized crescent, and that the design became popular in Turkish times. However, the true crescent was apparently also known to the Turks. Sakisian was also not conscious of the ancient Arabian origin of the crescent as the symbol of the moon god, for he states that the arrangement of the closed crescents in threes excludes the idea of a lunar representation.

While the Turks may not have intended a lunar representation when

<sup>49</sup> Ibid., pp. 70-71.

<sup>50</sup> J. Hornell, 'The Sea-Going Mtepe and Dau of the Lamu Archipelago,' *Mariner's Mirror*, XXVII (1941), 54-68.

they showed closed crescents, there can be little doubt that originally the crescent stood for the god of the moon in Arabian art. Sakisian himself relates that it is known that in the eleventh century the cathedral of Ani was converted to a mosque, and the cross on its dome was replaced by a silver crescent. In backwater Mukalla I photographed such a crescent with an eight-pointed star between the open horns at the top of an ornament over a fountain in a public square (Fig. 7-f). Sakisian mentions numerous eight-pointed stars from sixteenth-century Turkish sources associated with peacock eyes, some inside the smaller circle.

In regard to the star-and-crescent on Aden dhows, we can definitely rule out any influence from the Turkish flag, since the early twentieth century, or even the late nineteenth, is certainly too late to account for such oculi designs found along the South Arabian coast. Besides the time factor, we have the fact that the flag shows the crescent on its side with the horns pointing to one side. All crescents used for oculi, whether in South Arabia or Portugal have the horns pointing upward, and thus are earlier.

The Portuguese today use the star-and-crescent emblem as a substitute for the true oculus, along with other devices. Hornell relates that in Algarve a crescent was frequently seen with the horns pointing upward;<sup>51</sup> in five instances it was surmounted by a solitary star, and in two instances by three stars. The fact that some of the boats showed clusters of three stars is very significant, and would tend to show a definite Moslem influence. It might be suggested that the Portuguese copied the crescent-and-star from either the Turks or the Arabs in the Indian Ocean. However, this seems very unlikely, since when the Portuguese entered the Indian Ocean they essentially continued the spirit of the Crusades, and certainly would not have borrowed an emblem so symbolic in Western eyes of the Moslems. Rather the Moslems who spent so long in the Iberian peninsula must receive the credit for introducing the star-and-crescent into Portugal. It should be noted that this must have taken place before the middle of the thirteenth century, at which time the Christians had almost completely reconquered Spain.

It might be suggested that the Portuguese introduced the star-and-crescent to Aden. However, it is difficult to believe that the Arabs had to borrow this typically Islamic device from the Portuguese. There seems no reason to doubt that the Turks were responsible for the introduction of the crescent and star to Aden as an oculi design, since it is

<sup>51</sup> J. Hornell, 'Boat Oculi Survivals,' *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute*, LXVIII (1938), 340.

known that they used that combination in the sixteenth century. We have seen that the Turks captured Aden in 1538; they remained there until forced out by the British, who first gained a foothold in Aden by signing a treaty of alliance with the Sultan of Lahej in 1802. It is certainly more than a coincidence that today one of the commonest flags seen flying in the town of Aden, and on Aden dhows in the harbor, is the Turkish flag. It seems that the Turkish flag may have actually influenced the changing of the dot (which was probably originally a peacock eye) to a star.

## IV

It seems probable that the origins of most of these superstitions go far back into prehistoric antiquity. Since they were well developed in dynastic Egypt, their origins probably date to at least 4000 B.C., and perhaps earlier. There are two main classifications of superstitions concerning ships. One started with human sacrifice at the launching of a ship, and the other originated when the divine power of a god or goddess was enlisted to aid the ship. While in many places the original purpose of the two has become confused and often merged into one, the two can be separated in most instances.

It was customary to sacrifice a human being at the launching of a ship in ancient times, placing the head of the victim on the extended stemhead of the vessel. This custom has actually survived into relatively modern times, for as late as the turn of the present century the Solomon Islanders were still affixing a head of a slaughtered enemy to the prows of newly built canoes. And the memory still persists in other areas in legendary form. The natives of the Celebes relate that they used to impale a human head on the stem and one over the sternpost, but today they simply smear the blood from a cock on the sharp points of the prow and sternpost, and wrap on two headcloths, just as on men.<sup>52</sup> Likewise in India the Hindus on the east coast inject pumpkins with tumeric and vermillion and either smash them on the stemhead or run the boat over them so that red and yellow juice splashes about. The natives actually feel that this is simulation of a human sacrifice.<sup>53</sup>

In the West human sacrifice eventually led to the carved and painted heads on the bows of viking longships and the graceful figureheads of the great clipper ships of the sailing era. In many areas human sacrifice gave way to animal sacrifice, then to fowl, and as we have seen in India,

<sup>52</sup> G. E. P. Collins, *East Monsoon* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1937), p. 221.

<sup>53</sup> J. Hornell, *Water Transport* (Cambridge: University Press, 1946), p. 277.

finally to a vegetable. At many places around the coasts of the Arabian mainland a sheep or a goat is sacrificed at the launching of a ship, the head of the animal is cut off, and the flayed skin is lashed over the stemhead, hairy side out. This custom was apparently practiced in the Persian Gulf, the Red Sea, and the Arabian Sea, although it is being gradually discontinued in most areas. When I was in Aden in 1950 I questioned many of the Arab shipbuilders, but none of them would admit that they practiced such a rite. However, I did see pieces of burlap tied over the stemheads of several newly built vessels on the beach. When I asked the builders what they were for, they said to keep the sun off the stemhead. Beyond this they would not, or more probably, could not go in their explanations. It seems that the burlap had taken the place of the animal skin.

Hornell points out that in ancient Egypt a goat was sacrificed to the great god Amon,<sup>54</sup> and its skin was placed on a statue of the god. He suggests that the practice of placing animal skins on the prows of Arab ships had an origin common with Amon's rites. I cannot go along with this in the least. There seems no reason to doubt that this sacrifice connected with the stemhead of a vessel has any different origin than the hundreds of other variations of sacrifices or rituals connected with stemheads: they are all modifications of the original human sacrifice.

It is easy to see how this change took place in Arabia. Undoubtedly before the use of the skins the head of the animal was impaled on or hung from the stemhead. This would seem to be the explanation of the animal head shown on the stemhead of a thirteenth-century Arab ship (Plate 2-lower).<sup>55</sup> In a strict sense this was contrary to the true spirit of Islam, which not only forbade the representation of the human figure, but also of animal forms. As a substitute, the skin of the animal sacrificed was placed on the stemhead and no one was offended. It seems that the peculiar fiddle-shaped stemhead of the *batil* of the Persian Gulf is very probably symbolic of an animal head (Fig. 16-a).

It is interesting to note that in the last of the nineteenth century when Indian ships were built for Moslems in South Indian ports, elaborate ceremonies were performed prior to the launching.<sup>56</sup> Part of the ceremony consisted of slaughtering an odd number of sheep (up to five) and hanging the heads on the prow so that the blood flowed over it. The

<sup>54</sup> Ibid., p. 283.

<sup>55</sup> Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris, Arabe ms. 684, f. 61.

<sup>56</sup> J. Hornell, *Water Transport* (Cambridge: University Press, 1946), p. 278.

Moslems never attended the ceremonies, but they considered the rites necessary and did not regard a vessel ready for service until they had been completed.

It seems that the black tip on the extended stem of the Persian Gulf *bum* is symbolic of the black skin which used to be placed there (Fig. 5). Hornell suggests that this black tip may originally have had reference to ideas connected with blood sacrifice to the black stones of Arabia.<sup>57</sup> However, there seems little necessity to go to such an extreme explanation when the commonly used animal skins provide a logical explanation.

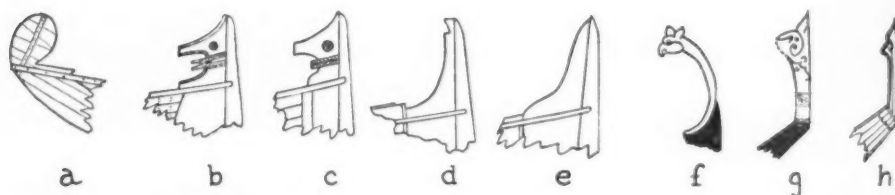


Fig. 16. Details of certain medieval Arab and modern Persian Gulf craft. (a & b) Bow and stern details of the Persian Gulf *batil*. The round piece of wood forming the stemhead probably is symbolic of the head which used to be placed there. The stern (b) also shows a design which probably originated with a head, the carved oculus representing the eye, and the forked central piece perhaps indicating a tongue in the curved jaws. (Original drawings from photographs published by F. Stark.) (c) Stern details of a *beden*, showing remarkable similarity with the *batil*. (Modified from Paris.) (d) Stern of modern *beden*. (Original drawing by the author.) (e) Stern detail of another type of *beden*. (Modified from Paris.) (f) Head of bird of prey on stern of thirteenth-century Arab boat. (Sketch by the author from *Bibliothèque Nationale ms. Arabe 3929, f. 155v.*) (g) Stern detail of thirteenth-century Arab boat. (Original drawing by the author from *Bibliothèque Nationale ms. Arabe 6847, f. 61.*) (h) Stern detail of thirteenth-century Arab boat. (Modified from F. E. Day.)

tion. The white line below the black area is perhaps symbolic of a flower garland. The *sanbuq* of the Persian Gulf also has a black tip on its stemhead, and this must likewise represent a black animal skin (Fig. 5). Mrs. H. R. P. Dickson has written me that at Kuwait some non-Kuwaiti *bums* have this tip painted blue rather than black.

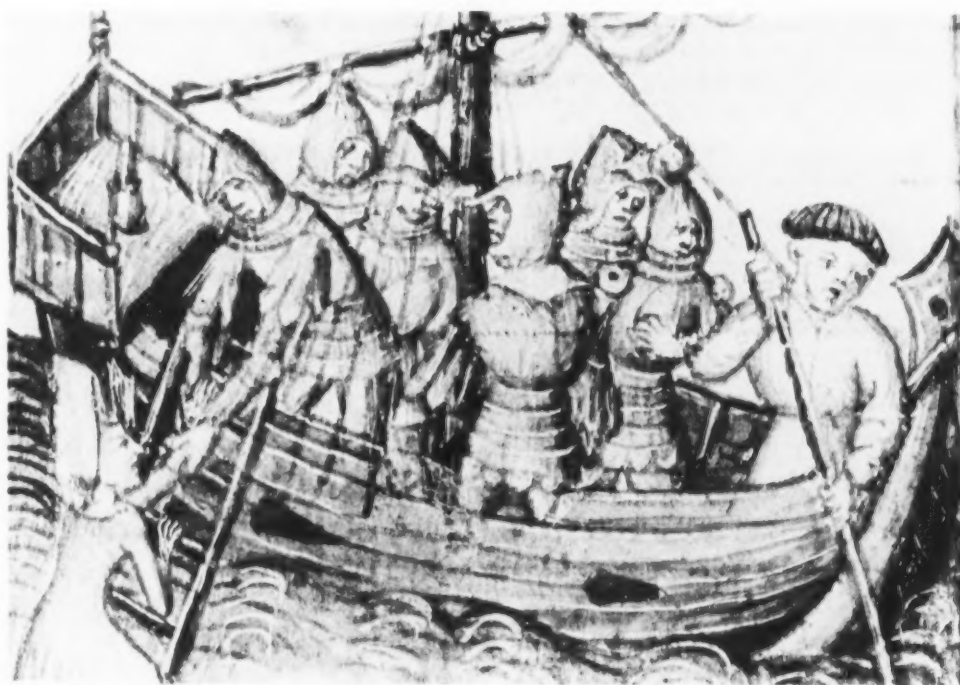
There are certain boats in the Persian Gulf whose design indicates that an animal head was also undoubtedly placed at the stern of the vessel. The *batil* and the *baqqarah* both have practically identical decorations on the stern, which have been called 'horse-head' decorations by some

<sup>57</sup> Ibid., p. 283.



Fifteenth-century French manuscript showing a circular oculus on the stemhead of a small rowboat

*Reproduced with the permission of The Pierpont Morgan Library (M 396, f. 74)*



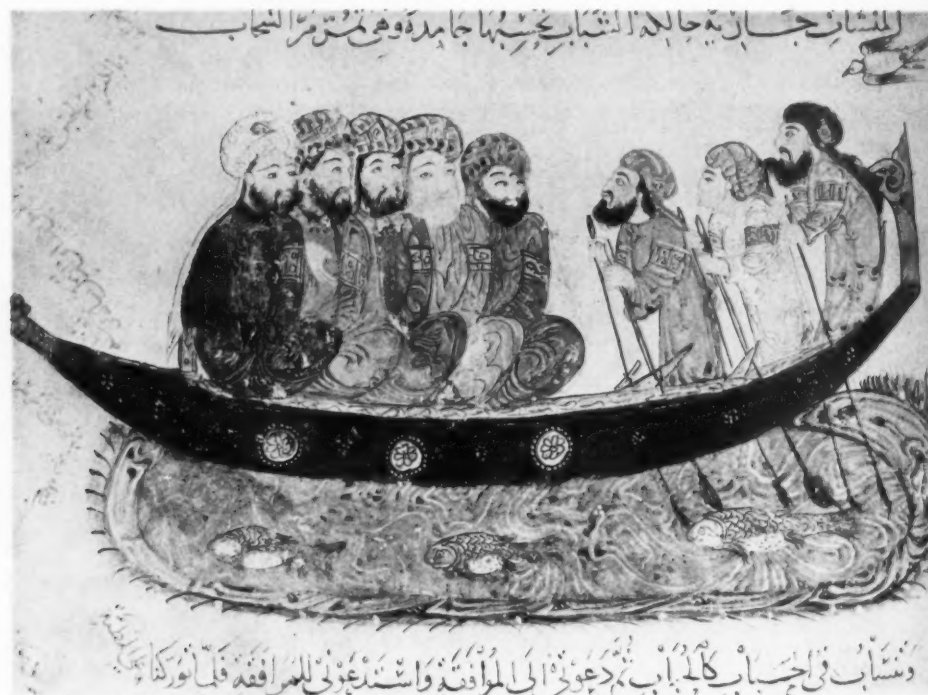
Fifteenth-century French manuscript showing a circular oculus on the stemhead of a single-masted ship

*Reproduced with the permission of The Pierpont Morgan Library (M 396, f. 96)*



Thirteenth-century Arab manuscript showing a boat with the head of a bird of prey decorating the stern

*Reproduced with the permission of the Bibliothèque Nationale (Ms. Arabe 3929, f. 155v)*



Thirteenth-century Arab manuscript showing a boat with an animal head partially visible at the bow and a conventionalized head at the stern

*Reproduced with the permission of the Bibliothèque Nationale (Ms. Arabe 6847, f. 61)*

authors (Fig. 16-b).<sup>58</sup> Excellent photographs of the bow and the stern details of the *batil* has been shown by Stark.<sup>59</sup> A similar stern was found on the now extinct *beden mal humal* illustrated by Paris (Fig. 16-c).<sup>60</sup> The *batil*, the *baqqarah* and the *beden* are all vessels of Oman. Near the top of each of the raised stern designs of these three vessels there is carved a round conventionalized oculus. Other types of *bedens* carry raised sternposts without any ornamentation, and thus show the final stage of degeneration of the original human sacrifice (Fig. 16-d & e).

There are numerous medieval Arab manuscripts showing corroborative evidence which leaves little doubt that these raised sternposts once carried animal heads. In one thirteenth-century manuscript we see an actual head on the elongated stern projection (Plate 2-upper and Fig. 16-f).<sup>61</sup> Dr. Richard Ettinghausen has informed me that this head is that of a bird of prey, and that it also occurs in similar fashion on eagles and vultures. There are also two thirteenth-century Arab manuscripts which undoubtedly show conventionalized raised heads at the stern (Fig. 16-g & h). One boat has an animal head on the prow (Plate 2-lower), while the other has nothing distinguishing on the prow, which is very similar to that of the modern Persian Gulf *bum*.<sup>62</sup> Similar decoration of boats can be traced right back to ancient Babylonia, for heads are shown on both raised prows and sterns in Mesopotamian seals.<sup>63</sup>

The sketches in Figure 16 would seem to indicate that there were several lines of descent from the original prototype. This is seen by the fact that two of the thirteenth-century forms (Fig. 16-g & h) are more degenerate than two of the modern forms (Fig. 16-b & c). Thus it would appear that Figure 16-d & e were a further degeneration of the thirteenth-century forms (Fig. 16-g & h). Figure 16-b & c are close to a wooden replica of an animal head, and I suggest that in Figure 16-b the forked member in the middle was supposed to represent a tongue and the curve in which it rested was intended to be the mouth. The conventionalized oculus here is thus actually meant to represent the eye of the head.

It is interesting to note that there is never a matching oculus on the bows of any of these modern craft carrying a conventionalized stern ocu-

<sup>58</sup> H. R. P. Dickson, *Arab of the Desert* (London: Allen & Unwin, 1949), p. 478.

<sup>59</sup> F. Stark, *Bagdad Sketches* (London: John Murray, 1947), Plate 17.

<sup>60</sup> F. E. Paris, *Essai sur la Construction Navale des Peuples Extra-Européens* (Paris: Bertrand [1841]), Plate 8.

<sup>61</sup> Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris, Arabe ms. 3929, f. 155v.

<sup>62</sup> Stoclet Collection, Brussels, illustrated by F. E. Day, 'Mesopotamian Manuscripts of Dioscorides,' *Metropolitan Museum of Art Bulletin*, VIII (1950), 278.

<sup>63</sup> The Pierpont Morgan Library, New York, N. 41947.

lus as in Figure 16. It would seem that the conventionalized oculus carried high on the Persian Gulf *bum* sternpost head was copied from these examples which are obvious degenerations of human or animal heads (Figs. 5 & 7). There are never any oculi on the stem of the *bum*. In the same line of thought it seems that the oculi shown on the fifteenth-century French steamheads (Plate 1) must have had the same origin as these Persian Gulf varieties, and probably represented the head of an animal.

Hornell has shown that the existing cases of human sacrifice in the East were attempts to liberate a guardian spirit from the human victim and incorporate it in the boat so that the craft became a living thing.<sup>64</sup> While this may well be true in some cases, it seems that in others the human victim was originally sacrificed to the god of the sea to appease his wrath. When man did this he was giving the sea god a victim instead of himself. With animal and fowl sacrifices the sea was still getting his sacrifice. Very probably the common Western custom of breaking the bottle of wine or whiskey over the bow of a ship originated as a libation to the god of the sea.<sup>65</sup> In Greco-Roman times milk was poured into the sea as a libation to Neptune. But apparently man soon found out that no amount of sacrifice to the sea god could prevent disaster, and he soon enlisted the aid of a more powerful deity to protect him at sea.

## V

Realizing that even with human sacrifice a ship could be destroyed by the elements, primitive man appears to have enlisted the aid of the sun god as a protective power. I follow Lethbridge in this hypothesis, which is conditioned by two facts:<sup>66</sup> (1) in Egyptian mythology the sun was supposed to be carried across the heavens in a boat; (2) in Bronze Age Scandinavian rock carvings a disk representing the sun is frequently shown in boats. It seems that this is how the oculus originally came to be placed on the bows of a ship: it was symbolic of the face of a god on board the ship protecting both ship and crew.

In early Egyptian times the sun god was a male god named Ra, who was supposed to be carried across the sky in the 'boat of dawn' and back again at night in the 'boat of dusk.' The moon was also a male god carried in

<sup>64</sup> J. Hornell, *Water Transport* (Cambridge: University Press, 1946), p. 282.

<sup>65</sup> J. Hornell (*Water Transport* [Cambridge: University Press, 1946], p. 286) suggests that this is a libation to the moon god, but it does not seem to be the case in most instances. For a delightful account of the maritime superstitions of the West and their origins, the reader is referred to T. C. Lethbridge, *Boats and Boalmen* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1952), pp. 63-92.

<sup>66</sup> T. C. Lethbridge, *op. cit.*, p. 67.

a like manner across the skies in a boat. Later in Roman times Isis was the goddess of the moon, who became the protecting deity of ships.

Hornell doubted that the Greeks copied the oculus from the Egyptians,<sup>67</sup> since (1) in Egyptian art the oculus was seldom shown except on funerary barges and on royal craft belonging to the Pharaoh, and (2) 'a female deity has ever been the protective spirit to which the sailor and the fisherman look.' This last statement is not true, for in France we find both male and female ships.<sup>68</sup> There is little doubt that we are referring to the protective goddess when we refer to a ship as 'she.' Likewise the fact that ships in some parts of the world are male would seem to show an origin from an earlier male god.

We do not know too much about the rites performed to Isis in Roman times, but we do have enough evidence to piece together part of the picture. Elaborate ceremonies were held to Isis at the time of the launching of a new ship. The sacred goose of Isis is often represented by a high, graceful neck in the stern, and there was often a shrine built into the stern. In a ceremony described in Apuleius' *Golden Ass* garlands of flowers were mentioned.<sup>69</sup> While it is not stated that these were placed on the ship, it seems reasonable to suppose that some were. Most rites concerned with Isis died with the Roman Empire. However, certain parts of the rites still exist as superstitions everywhere.

There is little doubt that the decorated triangular area found on boats in the Mediterranean, Europe, England, and the Indian Ocean probably had a religious origin related to the worship of Isis or some other goddess (or god). In the West the color is usually red, while in India the bow patches are either red or black. In South Arabia and East Africa the triangles are green.

The very color green is indicative that there was some religious significance attached to these triangles in ancient Arabia. In most Moslem lands green is a very respected color. In some places today only a 'shereef,' a descendant of the Prophet, can wear a green turban or dress.<sup>70</sup> The flags of Saudi Arabia, Egypt, and Pakistan have green fields. The Saudi Arabian flag carries a white sword and an inscription mentioning Allah, the Egyptian flag has a crescent and three stars, while the Pakistan flag has a

<sup>67</sup> J. Hornell, 'Boat Oculi Survivals,' *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute*, LXVIII (1938), 342, 347.

<sup>68</sup> T. C. Lethbridge, *op. cit.*, p. 71.

<sup>69</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 69.

<sup>70</sup> E. W. Lane, *The Manners and Customs of the Modern Egyptians* (Everyman Edition, [1835]), pp. 32, 34. I am indebted to Dr. Richard Ettinghausen for this reference.

crescent and a single star. One would probably have considerable difficulty convincing a good Moslem that the green field of his flag or his religious dress was originally connected with the worship of a pagan god, the god of the moon.

It seems that in Roman times there may have been other gods protecting a vessel besides the sea god and the goddess of the moon. In the second century A.D. Roman merchantman shown in Figure 11, the angel-like figure at the very stern is undoubtedly Isis, standing just aft of her shrine. In addition to this figure, there is a similar figure at the mast-head. There is also a figure on the stemhead, and three figures painted in the triangular area marked off at the stern. If it were not for some boat designs surviving in Sicily, we could say that the figures in the Roman merchantman, other than Isis, were purely for decoration.

Hornell relates that at Catania, Sicily, on the lower part of the high, vertical stemhead a figure of the heroine saint of Catania is sometimes depicted (Fig. 10), while on the stern quarters the figures of three other saints greatly revered in Catania are often painted.<sup>71</sup> Some add to these the patron saint of the owner on the sternpost. Hornell's description of this boat of Sicily would equally well fit the second-century Roman merchantman. Thus we may assume that this particular vessel is a direct descendant of a Roman type. Christianity—Roman Catholicism—has simply substituted saints for the pagan gods and goddesses. The similarity of decoration of this Sicilian boat with a Roman vessel is further evidence for a Roman origin of such designs found in the Mediterranean. A bow triangle and oculus has been added to the modern Sicilian boat.

## VI

We have seen that the custom of placing triangles and oculi on the bows and sterns of vessels in the Indian Ocean probably originated with the Romans in the first and second centuries A.D. Undoubtedly the only place in the world where the original rites to Isis are still practiced, although in a much distorted form, is in India. Hornell has shown that the ceremonies existing in India vary within wide limits even in closely situated towns.<sup>72</sup> Some of the rites are performed only at the launching and never performed again; others are performed at repeated intervals.

Along the Coromandel Coast of Southern India and in northern Ceylon somewhat similar ceremonies used to be performed with the sailing

<sup>71</sup> J. Hornell, 'Survival of the Use of Oculi in Modern Boats,' *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute*, LIII (1923), 308.

<sup>72</sup> J. Hornell, *Water Transport* (Cambridge: University Press, 1946), pp. 271-280.

coasters of the two areas. Prior to the launching, an elaborate *puja* ceremony was performed to dedicate the boat to a local goddess noted as the protectress of seafarers. The final observance of the rites consisted of incising an eye on each bow followed in some instances by the name of the goddess; this is called 'the opening of the eyes.'

An illustration which Hornell shows of a *dhoni* in South India has three series of figures of the sacred chank shell painted in yellow around the stem as votive garlands (Fig. 15-c).<sup>73</sup> Whether the triangular area left by these bands was significant or not is not apparent, but Hornell does not say anything about it. That it might be significant would seem to be indicated by the fact that a somewhat similar area is definitely marked out on a *dhoni* from Ceylon of which Hornell shows a photograph (Fig. 15-b). The eye is boss-like and nailed on behind this triangular area. Hornell also shows an illustration of a Ganges boat with a brass eye on a black triangular area at the bow (Fig. 15-a). The crews of these Ganges River boats regularly perform propitiatory ceremonies at the bows, especially at the time of a new moon, when a flower garland is hung over the stem and *puja* ceremonies are performed. Garlands of flowers are hung over the bows of even the catamarans along the Hindu east coast of India.

Outside of India the actual rites have long since become extinct. Probably the greatest single force affecting this in the East has been Islam. As far as one can determine, such rites are never practiced in Arabia today. However, almost everywhere we find shadowy vestiges, although the original purpose has long been forgotten. The existence of such things as oculi on Arab dhows does not necessarily show a degeneracy of Islam, but rather shows the great strength of superstitions connected with the sea. It is interesting to note that while the Moslems have completely obliterated all traces of the oculus from the west coast of India and most of Indonesia, the oculus is far from extinct on the Arabian mainland and among the Moslem East Africans. It would appear that the oculus has had a rejuvenation in the Gulf of Aden due to Turkish and Portuguese influence in the sixteenth century.

Hornell relates a legend told by an old Shirazi Arab of Zanzibar as to the origin of the oculus:<sup>74</sup> 'In the mosque at al-Kufa (Iraq) was a kiln on which the prophet Adam painted an eye. God said to Noah, "When you see water coming out of that eye, get into the ark." As a memorial, the eye continues to be painted on boats.' Whatever may be the origin of this

<sup>73</sup> Ibid., Fig. 67, p. 272.

<sup>74</sup> J. Hornell, 'Boat Oculi Survivals,' *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute*, LXVIII (1938), 345.

legend, it seems that it is pure rationalization to explain something alien to Islam. Today most Arab seamen believe that the various forms of oculi they place on their boats are either good luck charms or enable the boat to see in the water.

There are several Arab superstitions which had their origin in such pagan rites long ago. The first is the belief that women are bad luck aboard ship. The Arabs do not like to have women aboard, and in an attempt to discourage them as passengers, the captains charge them much higher rates. This has the same origin as a similar belief by Western seamen in the last century that women were unlucky aboard the great sailing ships. The reason seems quite clear: the ship was under the protection of a female goddess who might well become jealous of the presence of another woman.

Another somewhat similar superstition has been reported at Kuwait by Alan Villiers.<sup>75</sup> It is believed that if a barren woman leaps over the keel of a new *bum* before the planking is high enough to prevent her, she will conceive a male child; however, if she does, one of the carpenters working on the dhow will die, or failing that, the captain will die on the first voyage. Thus guards are posted to prevent *any* woman from jumping over the keel. A similar superstition is found among certain fishermen in western Europe where women must not step over nets or gear belonging to the fishermen.<sup>76</sup>

The reason for both, of course, is that by stepping over a boat keel or fishing gear, the women dedicate these to themselves and not to the protective goddess of the mariners. It was mentioned above that moon was masculine in ancient South Arabia, but feminine in Mesopotamia. After the Romans left the Indian Ocean, South Arabian shipping became confined to local waters, and the Persian Gulf was the great sea lane from the East to the West. Much of the tradition of all Arab seafarers today comes from the Persian Gulf, where the moon was feminine. The actual goddess has long been forgotten, but the superstition still lingers.

In Arabia we thus see an interesting degeneration of the two main superstitions connected with the sea. Human sacrifice, formerly observed by fixing the severed head to the prow, is now observed in some areas by the sacrifice of a goat or a sheep, but instead of placing the head on the prow, the headless skin of the animal is lashed over the stemhead. In a few areas this practice has apparently degenerated to placing a piece of burlap on the stemhead, while in the Persian Gulf the end of the stem-

<sup>75</sup> A. Villiers, 'Dhow-Builders of Kuwait,' *Geographical Magazine*, XX (1948), 350.

<sup>76</sup> T. C. Lethbridge, *op. cit.*, p. 91.

heads of both the *bum* and the *sanbuq* are painted black to simulate the hairy black animal skin.

On the *batil*, a round piece of wood is apparently symbolic of a head. On some of the other Persian Gulf craft there is a conventionalized oculus carved on the sternpost symbolic of a head placed at the stern. With the *bum* the black tip of the prow represents the head at the bow, the oculus on the sternpost represents the head at the stern, and the dip in the waterline at both bow and stern represents the two triangles and oculi placed there for the moon goddess (Fig. 5).

Ceremonies dedicating the boat to the moon god or goddess have long since become extinct, but many of the customs connected with the original rites are still very much in evidence. Triangles with oculi are found on some Arab boats, but on many others the oculus is left off the green triangle. Some boats show a bare spot where the triangle should be, while others simply show a dip in the waterline as it crosses the stem.

Other vestiges of the once elaborate ceremonies performed for the moon goddess are shown in the flower garlands and flags placed at the bow of a vessel. Hornell relates that before a boat was launched in northern Ceylon it was decorated with flags and plantain stems,<sup>77</sup> and a flower garland was hung around the prow. However, Hornell does not give us any idea of how the flags were placed. Nance shows two sixteenth-century Arab vessels gaily decorated with flags and talismans hung from the prow (Fig. 17).<sup>78</sup> Both of these show three flags in a row on the stemhead, besides the other flags. These three flags were found on the East African *mtepe* (Fig. 18). Since Burton relates that the *mtepe* prow was 'necklaced with strips of hides and bunches of talismans,'<sup>79</sup> and others refer to flower garlands, it seems that a wide range was practiced in the decoration of the *mtepe* prow. Nance suggests that the number three used for the flags and other talismans has a magical significance.<sup>80</sup> We have already seen that certain designs were repeated in threes on some Moslem flags and banners.

Today the *mtepe* is extinct, and the only place to my knowledge where flags are placed on the prows of vessels in the Moslem western Indian Ocean is on the South Arabian coast, for Villiers photographed a boat at Shihr with a single flag on the stemhead (Fig. 18). At Mukalla, just a little west of Shihr, I did not see any flags on the prows, and I am certain that such an arrangement is not found west of Mukalla. It seems that it

<sup>77</sup> J. Hornell, *Water Transport* (Cambridge: University Press, 1946), p. 274.

<sup>78</sup> R. M. Nance, 'Terradas and Talismans,' *Mariner's Mirror*, IV (1914), 9, Figs. 7 & 8.

<sup>79</sup> R. F. Burton, *Zanzibar: City, Island and Coast* (London: Tinsley Brothers, 1872), I, 73-74.

<sup>80</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 10.

may be found only at Shihr, because of the very peculiar decoration of the boats there.

While flags are apparently no longer placed on the stemhead, the Arabs of Yemen and Aden still decorate their boats with flags every Friday, the Moslem Sabbath. The first time I visited the native anchorage at Aden on a Friday I thought that some great holiday was being celebrated, for flags were fluttering from every shroud and stay. When I asked the occasion, I was told that it happened every Friday. This undoubtedly goes back to the rites to the moon goddess (god), which were probably performed with every full moon. With the coming of Islam, the emphasis was simply shifted to Allah.

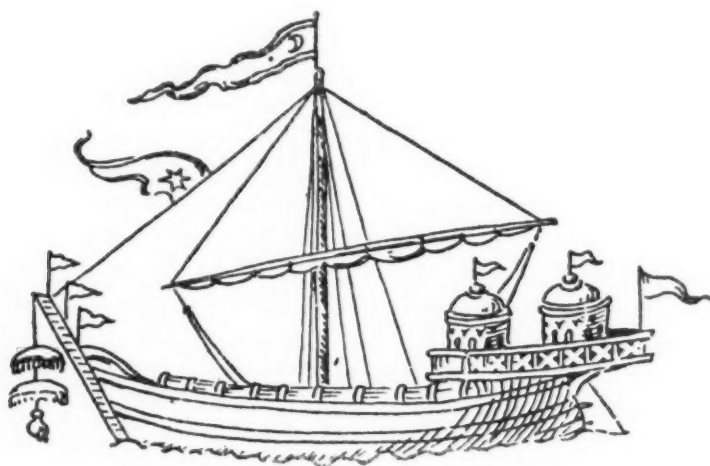


Fig. 17. Sixteenth-century Arab vessel decorated with three flags and talismans hung from the prow. (After Nance.)

The Shihr boats are unique since they have two triangles at each end—one green and one black (Fig. 18). The green triangle is of Arab origin, and the fact that it is found below the waterline shows that it was probably introduced sometime after the sixteenth century. It is probable that this was copied from larger Arab vessels which continually put into Shihr.

In India today many of the triangles are black, and they still cover the whole end of the vessel from the gunwale to the stem, although they are smaller than the original Ajanta prototype, so it seems that the black triangle is of Indian inspiration (Fig. 15-a). A further indication of the Indian origin of the black triangle is shown by the stemhead. On many boats on the east coast of India and in Ceylon the stemhead is carved

into a backward coiled figurehead, known as the *surul*, which is sacred. The *surul* is painted white and outlined with black; on larger vessels three horizontal bars on the back of the *surul* are indicative of the religious sect. Indian influence is further shown by the black rectangular patch with white lettering, which is similar to ones seen in India (Fig. 15-c).

While the stemhead of the Shihr boat shown by Villiers (Fig. 18) is not coiled, it is of the same general form and probably was originally coiled. It is painted white, outlined in black, and has two horizontal

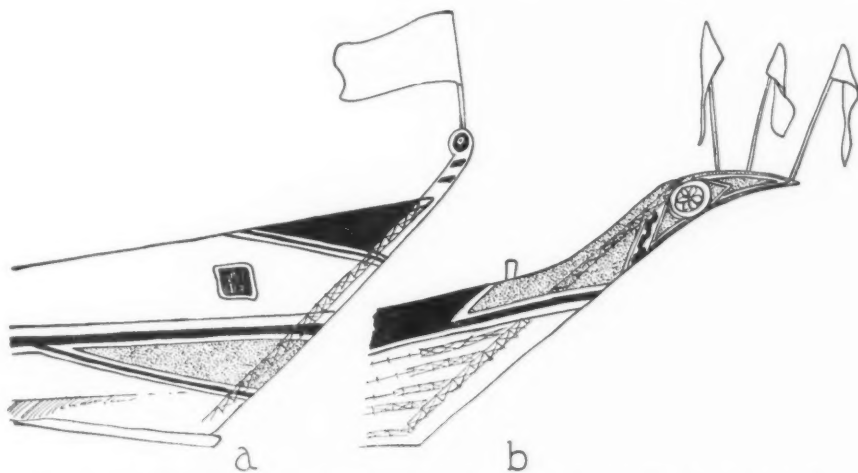


Fig. 18. Flags on the stemheads of modern vessels. (a) Single flag on the stemhead of a sewn boat from Shihr. Note the black triangle at the end of the boat and the green triangle somewhat below. (Original drawing by the author from a photograph by Alan Villiers.) (b) Bow of the East African *mtepe* showing three flags on the stemhead. Note the oculus and the painted area covering the prow of the boat. (Original drawing by the author from a photograph of a model published by Hornell.)

bars which must have had some religious significance. There can be little doubt that this complex was introduced by some Hindu settlers, probably merchants, in the not too distant past.

We have seen that many of the dhows of the Persian Gulf have a solitary conventionalized oculus carved on each side of the sternpost, but never have one in the bows. We have also seen that the sewn boat of South Arabia (with the exception of craft of Shihr with double triangles) often has conventionalized oculi carved on both the stem and sternpost, but never has any painted triangles.

We know that in medieval times certain Arab vessels were decorated with conventionalized oculi at both bow and stern, and these were apparently without triangles. This is shown in a thirteenth-century Arab manuscript.<sup>81</sup> The oculi look somewhat like flowers, with white centers and dark surrounding petals. From what is known of medieval Arab shipping, the majority of the Arab vessels hailed from the Persian Gulf or the Gulf of Oman, and thus we may suppose that this particular craft was from one of these areas. This thirteenth-century ship has lines which are similar to both the Persian Gulf *bum* and the South Arabian sewn boat.

On the other hand one might suppose that the South Arabian sewn boat was simply an example of a craft where the green triangles had been abandoned, but the oculi retained. Evidence for this might seem to be found in the African *mtepe*, for high on the stem and sternpost are similar conventionalized oculi. The *mtepe* has a colored panel covering each end of the boat, but it is more of a rectangle than a triangle (Fig. 18).

The Boro Budur sculptures show that the Indonesians used oculi at both bow and stern, but they apparently did not use any triangles. Numerous Arabic works refer to a people called the Sayabiga, who were originally Sumatrans settled in India, but who were captured by the Persians and removed to the Persian Gulf in the early seventh century A.D.<sup>82</sup> By the seventh century the Persians had risen to fill the vacuum left by the withdrawal of the Romans and the general decline of both the South Arabians and the Indians as maritime powers. It thus seems that the Sayabiga may have been responsible for the arrangement and form of oculi seen on the thirteenth-century Arab ship mentioned above.

However, we have seen that there can be little doubt that the modern carved Persian Gulf stern oculus is a degenerate form of a head which used to be placed on the sternpost; there is never an oculus on the bows. Whether the occurrence of carved conventionalized oculi without triangles on the sewn boats of South Arabia is due to influence from the Persian Gulf cannot be determined at this time. Likewise, we do not have enough evidence to determine the significance of the placing of the oculi on the stem and sternpost of the *mtepe*, rather than on the body of the hull.

<sup>81</sup> For an illustration of this see R. LeB. Bowen, Jr., 'Primitive Watercraft of Arabia,' *AMERICAN NEPTUNE*, XII (1952), Fig. 12, p. 213, drawn from Bibliothèque Nationale, Arabe ms. 5847, f. 119v by this author.

<sup>82</sup> G. Ferrand, 'Sayabiga,' *Encyclopedia of Islam* (London: Luzac & Co., 1934), IV, 200-201.

## VII

A few interesting conclusions can be drawn regarding the introduction of the oculus into the waters of the East. There seems little doubt that the oculus was first introduced to India by the Romans sometime before the end of the second century A.D. Two of the Ajanta frescos show that the oculus cult was thriving by the seventh century.

Circumstantial evidence might seem to indicate that the South Arabians adopted the oculus later than the Indians. If the Arabs borrowed the oculus from the Romans, it must have been sometime before the third century A.D. On the other hand, if the Arabs borrowed the oculus from the Indians, it could have taken place anytime up to the seventh century. There is little doubt that the start of Islam provides the upper limit for the development by the Arabs, for Islam dispelled pagan gods and goddesses and their worship. Since there was a gradual economic decline in trade in the Indian Ocean after the departure of the Romans, it seems that the Arabs must have adopted the practice of using oculi in the early centuries of the Christian era and spread the custom down the East African coast in pre-Islamic times.

The Boro Budur sculptures show that the oculus had spread to Indonesia sometime before the eighth century, presumably with Indian colonists. However, there is a serious question in this writer's mind as to how completely the oculus was spread through Indonesia before the advance of Islam into the area caused its extinction in many places. Ferrand considers that the peaceful penetration of Java and Sumatra by Indians began not later than the fourth century B.C.<sup>83</sup> There is no doubt that there were continued migrations for centuries after. It thus seems that the oculus was probably introduced to Indonesia sometime after the first or second century A.D. Of the many ships shown in the Boro Budur sculptures, only two show oculi.

Today in the Indonesian islands the oculus occurs only in Hindu Bali. Since there is no Moslem element in large parts of Borneo, Celebes, the Moluccas, or the Philippines, we cannot blame the lack of oculi in these areas on Islam. It would thus seem that we are not justified in assuming a universal distribution of the oculus in Indonesia before Islam. In fact, the evidence would seem to indicate that the oculus was limited essentially to Java and Sumatra. Prof. P. K. Hitti has told me that Indonesia was first visited by the Moslems in the eighth century; that dervishes, tourists, and adventurers carried Islam there in the succeeding years;

<sup>83</sup> G. Ferrand, 'Madagascar,' *Encyclopedia of Islam* (London: Luzac & Co., 1936), III, 64-75.

and that Islam took root among the natives and was well established by the start of the twelfth century. Thus Islam has had about one thousand years to obliterate the traces of the oculi in the areas in which they have established themselves. However, it seems that the oculus was perhaps stamped out before it had a chance to spread outside of Java and Sumatra.

We have seen that in the Comoro Islands and on the Island of Madagascar the outrigger canoes of Indonesian origin are invariably without oculi. The only oculi found in this area is at Mayotte Island, and these can be shown to be a degeneration of an original Indonesian design influenced by the Arab oculus. Ferrand has shown that there were two migrations of Indonesians to Madagascar;<sup>84</sup> the first probably took place about the beginning of the Christian era, and the second took place in the tenth century. These migrants were from Java and/or Sumatra.

Since most of these Comoro and Madagascar outriggers are without oculi, it might seem that these craft were the result of the first migration. Ferrand shows that the first migrants were Hinduized occidental Indonesians. Since we do not know whether or not the oculus was in universal use in Java and Sumatra by the tenth century, we cannot draw any conclusions as to which migration is represented by the Indonesian canoes found in the islands off the East African coast. However, since we have indicated that the oculus may have been introduced to the Persian Gulf in the seventh century by Indonesians, it seems that the canoes off the East African coast may well be attributed to the early migration at the start of the Christian era. Since the Hindu migrations to Indonesia started at least by the fourth century B.C., the lack of oculi on these East African canoes might seem to support the theory that the oculus was not known in India in pre-Christian times.

The only Indonesian outlier in which the oculus is found is at Botel Tobago, a small island off the southern end of Formosa.<sup>85</sup> The oculus is conventionalized (three concentric circular designs) and occurs at both ends of the high-pointed hull. The planks have comb cleats projecting inside for attachment to the ribs; this type of construction has parallels in the East only in the Moluccan *orembai* and the Solomon Islands *mon*.

Since eyes are known today on Chinese junks on the mainland only several hundred miles to the west, it might be suggested that this oculus diffused from a Chinese source, rather than coming several thousand miles north from central Indonesia. However, the fact that the oculi are

<sup>84</sup> Ibid., and G. Ferrand, 'Le K'ouen-louen,' *Journal Asiatique*, XIV, 68.

<sup>85</sup> J. Hornell, 'Boat Construction in Botel Tobago,' *Man*, XXXVI (1936), 145-147.

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<sup>86</sup> R.

<sup>87</sup> Ibid.

<sup>88</sup> H.

pp. 467.

<sup>89</sup> Ibid.

<sup>90</sup> J.  
logical

geometrically conventionalized and are found at both ends of a canoe of Indonesian construction would seem to rule out the possibility of a Chinese origin, for Chinese eyes are never made up of geometric designs, and further they are only found on the bows.

It certainly cannot be fortuitous that Indonesian-type oculi are found on an Indonesian-type hull. It must be assumed that this canoe left central Indonesia, since the oculus does not exist today further east than Bali and apparently never did. It further must be assumed that the migration bringing this canoe started sometime well after the beginning of the Christian era. We can also deduce that the comb-cleat type of construction was abandoned in central Indonesia sometime after this time, for today it is known only from the Moluccas.

It seems that the Chinese probably borrowed the eye from the Indians. I have previously shown that the sails of the three-masted Ajanta ship of India are of Chinese origin or inspiration, but that the hull is definitely of indigenous Indian design.<sup>86</sup> Since the Ajanta ship is seventh century and well developed, it seems reasonable to assume that the Chinese were traveling to India considerably before this. Today this type of sail still exists in India, and in China near the mouth of the Yangtze and near Amoy.<sup>87</sup> It is thus not at all surprising that today we find light-colored triangles and modified triangles on the bows of Amoy junks in association with an oculus. Smyth shows two small sketches of Amoy junks with oculi painted on light-colored areas on the bows.<sup>88</sup> One is apparently on a roughly triangular area, the other is on a diamond-shaped patch.

Between India and China the oculus was until recently found almost continuously along the coasts. The occurrence of the oculus in Burma is simply an extension of Bengal in India. Formerly the indigenous sailing craft of the Irrawaddy had either an attached oculus of wood or metal, or one boldly carved out. These were usually comma-shaped with a tail behind, and are completely different from the Chinese types seen on sampans in Burmese ports. Reaching the Malay Peninsula we find the oculus on boats of the west coast. Smyth shows a fishing sampan at Junkseylon with an oculus on a bow triangle,<sup>89</sup> while Hornell relates that a model of a Selangor boat had an eye<sup>90</sup> consisting of a black eccentric pupil on a

<sup>86</sup> R. LeB. Bowen, Jr., 'Eastern Sail Affinities,' *AMERICAN NEPTUNE*, XIII (1953), 193-196.

<sup>87</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 195.

<sup>88</sup> H. W. Smyth, *Mast and Sail in Europe and Asia* (London: Wm. Blackwood & Sons, Ltd., 1929), pp. 467, 468.

<sup>89</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 481.

<sup>90</sup> J. Hornell, 'Survival of the Use of Oculi in Modern Boats,' *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute*, LIII (1923), 298.

white ellipse, painted on a green panel at the extreme end of the top-strake.

Rounding the Malay Peninsula we find the oculus in the Gulf of Siam. Smyth shows an oculus on a rectangle high on the forward part of a Cambodian coaster,<sup>91</sup> which carries the tall, high-peaked standing lug sails of this area, rather than Chinese lugs. Chinese junks of the Gulf of Siam also have oculi on similar rectangles.<sup>92</sup>

On the southern tip of Indo-China one finds a very primitive craft which has several planks built up over a dugout underbody. The narrow head, which looks like a turtle head, is generally painted green and red and has on each side an eye consisting of a black pupil on a white oval. Going farther north in Indo-China we come to the Annamite coast. Here we find the well-known elongated Annamite eye on a dark rectangular area along the forward gunwale.

Farther north is the China coast with a continuous chain of oculi of slightly varying shapes covering the southern and central coasts. Oculi apparently are not used in northern China.<sup>93</sup> Many of the oculi are simply placed on the hull, rather than on a rectangular or triangular area. I examined a junk built in Hong Kong which was tied up at Mystic Seaport, Connecticut, in 1953; it had a white bow triangle below and forward of the eye.

We know that in the second century A.D. the Greco-Romans made a few trips past India to the borders of China.<sup>94</sup> It might be argued that the Chinese acquired the oculus from the Romans through this direct contact, but it does not seem plausible in view of the small number of these trips. There seems no reason to doubt that the Chinese borrowed the eye from India. It is interesting to note that the common form of the oculus on the East African coast is a white circle with a black dot in its center; it seems that this may have been the purer form, and the various Chinese modifications have been derived from this (Fig. 19). At any rate, it seems that the Chinese must be credited with spreading this particular form of the oculus completely along the shores to the westward of China all the way to Burma.

In the New World the only indigenous eyes placed on boats are found in British Columbia, where the Indians ornamented their canoes with a

<sup>91</sup> H. W. Smyth, op. cit., p. 436.

<sup>92</sup> J. Poujade, *La Route des Indes et ses Navires* (Paris: Payot, 1946), p. 257. I am indebted to Dr. G. F. Hourani for calling to my attention this most valuable work on the native craft of Indo-China.

<sup>93</sup> J. Hornell, 'Boat Oculi Survivals,' *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute*, LXVIII (1938), 347.

<sup>94</sup> G. F. Hourani, *Arab Seafaring* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1951), p. 36.

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wealth of totemistic designs, with long oblong eyes frequently placed on the bows, and sometimes placed at both bow and stern. Since these Amerinds are of Mongolian origin, and since the eyes are somewhat similar to the Chinese and Annamite eye forms, it is logical to suppose that these American eyes diffused from Western Asia. If such is actually the case, the diffusive elements could not have started until after the beginning of the Christian era. If it can be proven archaeologically or anthropologically that the movements responsible for the American eye designs antedate the Christian era, then we must assume that the American eyes are an independent invention. Such would not be very surprising in view of the well-developed totemistic art of these people. If eyes were placed on a boat, it would be logical to place them at the bow. A strong argument in favor of an independent origin of these eyes is the complete lack of the use of oculi between China and the New World.



Fig. 19. Forms of oculi. (a) Common form at Zanzibar. (b) Form seen on Chinese fishing junk at Penang, Malay Peninsula. (*From a photograph of the craft by Hornell.*) (c) Chinese 'phoenix eye.' (*After Hornell.*) (d) Chinese 'tadpole eye.' (*After Hornell.*) (e) Chinese 'dragon eye.' (*After Hornell.*) (f) Annamite oculus from Indo-China. (*After Poujade.*) (g) Totemistic form of oculus from British Columbia. (*After Hornell.*)

In connection with the Pacific shores, it is very important to note that there is a complete lack of the oculus in Melanesia, Micronesia, and Polynesia. At first this would seem almost impossible, since some of the ethnic groups contributing to the population complexes of Melanesia, Micronesia, and Polynesia very probably originated in India, Burma, Indonesia, and the Asiatic mainland, where oculi were known early in the Christian era. However, there is little doubt that some of the ethnic groups left well before the oculus was introduced to their homelands, as was apparently the case with the first Indonesians who migrated to Madagascar in the early centuries of the Christian era. Thus any pre-Christian migrations would obviously never possess the oculus. On the other hand, the lack of the oculus in the island groups could simply mean that the groups making up the complex left from areas which never knew the oculus.

In summary we see that the Romans probably introduced the oculus to India in the early centuries of the Christian era, and that the South Arabians copied the idea from either the Romans or the Indians about the same time. The Arabs spread the oculus down the East African coast sometime before the seventh century A.D. The Indians spread the oculus to Java, and perhaps Sumatra, too, sometime before the eighth century. There is no evidence to show that the oculus was ever widespread in Indonesia; today it is only found at Bali. It seems that the Chinese borrowed the oculus from the Indians sometime in the early centuries of the Christian era and are responsible for many of the forms found between Burma and China. The lack of the oculus in the island groups of Melanesia, Micronesia, and Polynesia is further evidence for a late date of introduction into the Eastern seas.

*Richard LeBaron Bowen, Jr., is well known to NEPTUNE readers. Since his first article was published over six years ago in the NEPTUNE, he has been a frequent contributor to this and similar journals. His studies on boats and marine topics of Arabia and the East in general have made him one of the world's leading authorities on the subject of primitive watercraft.*

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## *El Museo Naval de Madrid*

BY H. PHILIP SPRATT

THE premises of the Ministerio de Marina in Madrid are situated near the famous Museo del Prado and the quite palatial post office in the Paseo del Prado, which with its wide avenues, lawns and fountains, rivals even the boulevards of Paris. Decorative stern lanterns mounted at the windows of the second floor impart a distinctive nautical aspect to the edifice (Plate 3), as did also the armed marines stationed as sentinels before the entrance in the Calle de Montalban. The main staircase in polished brown marble would have overwhelmed me, in its spaciousness and rich decoration; but I had devoted the previous week to the cathedrals of Northern Spain, and these had helped me to take the measure of Spanish architecture. Grandeur and an infallible sense of color and decoration surround the visitor on all sides.

In proportion to the maritime history of Spain, the Museo Naval in Madrid is one of the richest, and is certainly the oldest of all maritime museums. It was the earliest in conception, and for some time it remained unique of its kind in the world. Other naval museums followed at Paris and London, in the Netherlands and other European maritime countries, in Scandinavia, and in the United States of America.

The roots of the Spanish Museo Naval can be traced as far back as 1503, when the famous Casa de la Contratación in Seville realized the need for a central institution of nautical science, with the necessary instruments and charts. Other important collections and libraries were formed at the schools of San Telmo in 1681, and by the Real Compañía de Caballeros Guardias Marinas in 1717, with their annex the Observatorio de Marina of San Fernando. Later were also added the instructional collections and library of the Escuela de Madrid, founded by Felipe II.

The first conception of a real Museo Naval dates from 1792, and was due to the initiative of the then Minister of Marine, Antonio Valdés, who decided to create a national center devoted to the nautical sciences which

had served the pioneers of exploration and commerce. He therefore commissioned various naval officers to collect relevant manuscripts and books, ship models, charts and nautical instruments. This enterprise was not an immediate success; but the materials which had been assembled were preserved in the Depósito Hidrográfico at Madrid.<sup>1</sup> Later, however, the scheme was revived by Martín Fernández de Navarrete, Director of the Depósito, an enthusiastic marine historian and faithful disciple of Valdés. His efforts were so successful that, in spite of all obstacles and difficulties, the Museo Naval was ceremonially installed in the Palacio de los Consejos at Madrid on 21 November 1843.

Soon afterwards, the collections were transferred to the ancient Casa del Platero, which has since disappeared from the Plaza de la Armería. Thus, when in 1853 the museum had to be moved for the second time, it was accommodated in part of the Senate House (not far from the present Estación del Norte, where the traveler arrives from London and Paris). Here it remained until 1930, when the last move was made to the Ministerio de Marina in the Paseo del Prado.

The museum entrance is at the side, in the Calle de Montalban, and is open to the public from 10 A.M. to 1:30 P.M., for the modest sum of one peseta (about three cents) on weekdays, and free on Sundays. From the outside there was no indication whatever of the museum within, and it seemed to me that more could and should be done to proclaim its existence and popularize its fine collections, to reassure the would-be visitor, and to entice even the casual from the street. Timid people, such as the present writer, may well hesitate to approach the palatial entrance of the Ministerio de Marina without public invitation, and in the face of armed defense. Indeed, I should have retreated from those sentinel-marines, had I not also been armed, with a letter of introduction to Capitán Julio F. Guillén, the Director.

On arrival in the Museo Naval, on the first floor, I was received, or rather welcomed, with the old-fashioned courtesy and charm which seems natural to the Spanish, and was furnished with a research card which confers upon the holder the 'freedom of the museum' and all the facilities for special research available in the library and chart room. Then I returned to the entrance, in order to tour the museum collections from the start. In the Vestibulo are sold the one-peseta admission tickets, and various publications of the museum; and here one can offer a contribution to the Spanish lifeboat fund. The showcase in the center of this small room contains two models of primitive craft; one of them, restored at the Museo Naval in considerable detail, shows characteristic craft of the

<sup>1</sup> Rafael Estrada, *El Depósito Hidrográfico: testigos de una época que desaparecen* (Madrid, 1932).

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Norsemen, similar to the famous Gokstad ship now preserved at Oslo.

In another case, under the window, are exhibited specimens of the museum publications,<sup>2</sup> in collaboration with the Instituto Histórico de Marina, and the Superior Council of Scientific Research.<sup>3</sup> Around the walls are portraits of Spanish naval celebrities, and a manuscript letter dated 1794 from José Mendoza Ríos to the Minister of Marine, Antonio Valdés, in appreciation of his labors in the formation of the Museo Naval. Here also is part of the fine collection of water colors by Rafael Monleón,<sup>4</sup> which illustrate the evolution of sailing craft from the earliest times to the final development of the clipper ship. This most instructive series is continued in the next room.

The first numbered exhibition room, Sala I, is separated from the Vestibulo by two side screens; there is no door. Indeed, all the museum exhibition rooms lead one into the other without more than formal demarcation. The walls are covered either with tapestries or similar plain material; thick curtains and carpets, and comfortable seats all help to avoid the hard and cold atmosphere encountered in some public museums. Here one feels at ease, able to contemplate the models and pictures at peace and leisure.

The collections in this room are devoted to the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. First we notice the restored model of a Spanish oared vessel used in the Mediterranean, and beside it one of the principal treasures of the museum, the model (Plate 5) of a four-masted Flemish ship of about 1592. Small white cards with one, two or three red stars, placed on or beside the exhibits, serve to indicate at once their relative importance. This Flemish model is a three-star exhibit, and Capitán Guillén considers it to be one of the most valuable in existence.<sup>5</sup>

Another model of unusual interest is the reproduction of an 'exvoto' in the Santuario de la Consolación at Utrera (Plate 3). This represents a Spanish ship of about 1540, and is an excellent specimen of its class.<sup>6</sup> Perhaps the most spectacular exhibit in this room is the superb picture of the Battle of Lepanto,<sup>7</sup> which took place on 7 October 1571. There follow four pictures which represent distinct phases of naval battles with the Dutch in the seventeenth century.<sup>7</sup> Special mention should be made of the fine portrait of Hernán Cortés (1485-1547), the famous explorer, and

<sup>2</sup> Museo Naval, *Catálogo guía del Museo Naval de Madrid* (IX edición, Madrid, 1945).

<sup>3</sup> José María Albareda y Herrera, *Consideraciones sobre la investigación científica* (Madrid, 1951), 466 pp.

<sup>4</sup> Rafael Monleón, *Diccionario de arquitectura naval: manuscritos* (Madrid, 1888).

<sup>5</sup> Julio F. Guillén, *Exvotos marinos* (Madrid, 1934).

<sup>6</sup> Cayetano Rosell, *Historia del combate naval de Lepanto* (Madrid, 1853).

<sup>7</sup> Cesáreo Fernández-Duro, *Armada española* (Madrid, 1895); H. Philip Spratt, 'Maritime museums of the Netherlands,' *Mariner's Mirror* (London), July 1950, p. 233.

of the chart which shows the route of the expedition under Juan Sebastián Elcano in 1519-1522.

The second room, Sala II, is devoted to the explorations and service of *Numancia*,<sup>8</sup> a three-masted iron-hulled ironclad of 7,500 tons displacement,<sup>9</sup> built at the Chantiers de la Méditerranée and launched on 19 November 1863. There is a fine model of the vessel (which was shown at the Exposition Universelle at Paris in 1889), also a separate operable model of her horizontal machinery, of 1,000 nominal and about 3,700 indicated horsepower. This turned a six-bladed screw, and drove the vessel at a speed of thirteen knots.

Other ship models represent *Villa de Madrid* of 1862 with sails set, and the armored *Gerona* of 4,350 tons displacement and 600 horsepower. In a case are naval uniforms of the period, and there is a fine portrait of Vice-Admiral Juan Bautista Antequera, who commanded *Numancia* at El Callao.<sup>10</sup> This famous naval battle of 1866 is represented in another canvas, the work of Rafael Monleón, while a small model of the harbor of El Callao shows the position of the Peruvian batteries and the Spanish naval vessels in the action.

Christopher Columbus and his discoveries constitute the main theme of Sala III.<sup>11</sup> In the center is the model of *Santa María* of 180 tons displacement (Plate 4), on which Columbus sailed to the New World in 1492. This model was based on the reconstruction by Monleón,<sup>12</sup> prepared in 1892 to celebrate the Fourth Centenary. Enclosed in the case, as in others at the Museo Naval, we notice (with some surprise at Madrid) a small pot of chemical desiccant. Mounted on the wall is the chart of Juan de la Cosa, made in 1500, the first known representation of America,<sup>13</sup> and described as 'la pieza principal del Museo.'

This room has a fine decorative colored window onto the Paseo del Prado, based on the chart of Juan de la Cosa. The portrait of Christopher Columbus<sup>14</sup> occupies the place of honor, and we notice also a water color of Rafael Monleón which represents the famous little squadron of three vessels, *Santa María*, *Pinta* and *Niña*. Another model of *Santa María* (Plate 4) was made from the reconstruction which Capitán Julio F. Guillén, Director of the Museo Naval, prepared in 1929 for the Exposición Ibero-

<sup>8</sup> Eduardo Iriondo, *Impresiones del viaje de circunnavegación de La Numancia* (Madrid, 1867).

<sup>9</sup> E. Heriz, *Memoria sobre los barcos acorazados* (Barcelona, 1875), pp. 49-50.

<sup>10</sup> Conde de Santa Pola, *Viaje de circunnavegación de La Numancia* (Madrid, 1927).

<sup>11</sup> Julio F. Guillén, *Cristóbal Colón* (Madrid, 1951).

<sup>12</sup> Rafael Monleón, *Las carabelas de Colón* (Madrid, 1891); *La nao Santa María* (Madrid, 1892).

<sup>13</sup> Antonio Vascano, *La carta de Juan de la Cosa* (Madrid, 1892); Patricio Montojo, *Las primeras tierras descubiertas por Colón* (Madrid, 1892).

<sup>14</sup> Cayetano Rosell, *El retrato de Colón* (Madrid, 1892).

Americana at Seville;<sup>15</sup> but the model presented in 1923 to the Science Museum in London<sup>16</sup> bears more resemblance to the Monleón version.

The screen division leads into Sala IV, which is devoted to naval developments of the seventeenth century. First we notice the beautiful decorated stern of a ship model which bears evidence of the French influence (Plate 5). In the same case is a relief model of Gibraltar, about the same period. The opposite case, on the left, contains a number of excellent naval ship models, some of them part-sectioned to show the internal details of construction. Here in particular should be mentioned *Velasco* and *San Vicente Ferrer* of 1767.

In another small case, at the wall, is the model of an armored ship of 1780, stationed at Gibraltar.<sup>17</sup> More spectacular, however, is the fine three-masted model of the line-of-battle ship *El Rayo*, complete with all sails set, also that of the somewhat smaller *Diana* of 1792. Both models show an admirable wealth of detail. The last two cases in this room contain models of *La Flora*, and of the battleship *Real Carlos* of 1787, one of the finest Spanish vessels of her century. On the side are exhibited some personal relics of Carlos III.

The scientific results of maritime expeditions constitute the main theme of Sala V. Here are diaries, manuscripts and personal relics of the eminent mathematician and naval scientist J. Juan y Santacilia (1713-1775), with a fine portrait. Another case contains documents and relics of the Malaspina expedition of 1789; a portrait of the commander is also exhibited. Some further water colors by Monleón represent various Oriental boats, while the show cases contain numerous models of native craft from Borneo, Siam, China and the Philippines.

Special mention should be made of the portrait of Francisco Maurelle (1752-1820), with charts and pictures of the Vavao Islands which he discovered while in command of *Princesa* in 1780. Other cases in this room contain native arms and utensils from Africa, South America and Oceania. Here are also preserved some of the museum collection of 15,000 marine charts and manuscripts. Part of this vast collection has been documented,<sup>18</sup> but I understand that comprehensive annotated lists are in preparation, which should do much to facilitate research.

In Sala VI is exhibited the superb collection of portraits of Spanish

<sup>15</sup> Julio F. Guillén, *La carabela Santa María* (Madrid, 1928).

<sup>16</sup> H. Philip Spratt, 'Les Collections Maritimes du Science Museum à Londres,' *Revue Maritime* (Paris), Juin 1951, p. 783; 'Le Collezioni Marittime del Science Museum di Londra,' *Marina Mercantile* (Genova), No. 5, 1950, p. 203.

<sup>17</sup> Cesáreo Fernández-Duro, *Armada española* (Madrid, 1895), VII, 271.

<sup>18</sup> Julio F. Guillén, *Catálogo de los manuscritos, cartas y planos referentes a California existentes en el Museo Naval* (Madrid, 1932).

admirals and captains of the Armada. Here also should be noticed a picture of the Battle of San Vicente in 1797, and a delicate model in ivory made by French prisoners of war. This is a fine specimen of its kind, and represents the French ship *La Créolle* of 1795, about the period of the Napoleonic wars. Other notable models comprise that of *San Antonio*, a work of marvelous precision and detail, and the uncased sixteen-foot model of *San Juan Nepomuceno* of 1766. The latter is mounted on the slip, as for launching, and is half-sectioned to show the internal details of her construction.

The small Sala VII, or side alcove, contains in particular the portrait of Gabriel de Ciscar (1759-1829), mathematician and scientist, who did much for the introduction of the decimal metric system. Some water colors illustrate the earliest steamboats in France, Scotland and the United States. Their introduction in Spanish waters followed at a later date.<sup>19</sup> The first transatlantic paddle steamer *Savannah* of 1818 receives honorable mention, and the die-hard Spanish romance of Blasco de Garay in 1543 is denounced.

The installation of Sala VIII is provisional. Miscellaneous exhibits include the wheel from the corvette *Nautilus* of 1892, a famous ship in her time,<sup>20</sup> which was used until 1932 for instructional purposes. The future plans are to reproduce here the deck of a modern vessel, with all the appropriate equipment in action. The space underneath, divided into three sections, would serve for an exhibition of dioramas. Also the space available under the main staircase of the Ministerio de Marina would be utilized to reproduce the interior of a submarine with all the modern services in action.

The collection of nautical instruments is set out in Sala IX. Here should be mentioned the fine reproduction of the astrolabe of Alfonso X the Wise (1221-1284) who founded a Center for scientific studies in Toledo, an authentic Flemish astrolabe of the sixteenth century, and the case of nautical instruments which Tobias Volckamer made in 1596 for Felipe II. This superb piece, in excellent preservation, consists of compass, sundial and solar quadrant, planisphere, astrolabe, tape measure or plumb line, and nautical calendars.

The two most important exhibits in this room are shown in special cases with internal illumination, and comprise the earliest Spanish books on nautical science. One of these by Pedro de Medina was printed at Valladolid in 1545, and later translated into Italian, French and Flemish; the other by Martín Cortés was published at Seville in 1551, and lat-

<sup>19</sup> M. M. del Mármol, *Idea de los barcos de vapor* (Sanlúcar, 1817), 76 pp.

<sup>20</sup> Fernando Villamil, *Viaje de circunnavegación de la Nautilus* (Madrid, 1895).

er ran into nine editions in Great Britain. Two notable portraits in this room are those of Dionisio Alcalá Galiano (1760-1805), and of Felipe Bauzá y Cañas (1764-1834) who participated in the Malaspina expedition.

The side alcove Sala X contains in particular the model of the electric submarine *Peral* of 1887, which attained a speed of six knots on trial.<sup>21</sup> This fine model is half-sectioned, and shows all the technical details of the internal construction and machinery. On the wall is a portrait of the inventor, Isaac Peral y Caballero (1851-1895). Here also are water colors of the earliest paddle steamers in the British Navy. The first steamer in the Spanish Navy was, in fact, the Canadian transatlantic pioneer *Royal William* of 1831.<sup>22</sup> She entered the Spanish Navy in 1834 under the name of *Isabel II*.

The room numbered as Sala XI is, in fact, the lecture theater, and will be described later. The last of the numbered exhibition rooms is Sala XII, which contains models of small naval steamships, and torpedo craft both steam and motor driven. Most of the vessels represented are Spanish, but one notices also some of British, German and Italian construction. Sectioned models of torpedoes are shown, while actual specimens add a further touch of realism. One model shows a Vickers automatic submarine mine, complete with all components, as made in Spain in 1917. Portraits represent Spanish notables in torpedo warfare.

The various exhibition rooms of the museum surround two interior Spanish courts, with marble floors, spacious and cool, open to the main roof three stories above. The first of these, Patio A, devoted to the Spanish arsenals and naval construction, has its walls decorated with war-scarred naval banners, ship stern models and stern lanterns, and tapestries of naval interest. Two fine models of naval arsenals are those of El Ferrol, constructed in 1750, and of La Carraca, where in 1887 the submarine *Peral* was built (see above).

An uncased fifteen-foot model of the three-decked *Santa Ana* of 1784 deserves special mention for its completeness. Other notable ship models include one of about 1750, shown in section, with a remarkable wealth of internal detail; and another shown canted over on its keel, for the purpose of hull inspection and repair. The centerpiece in this court is the uncased twenty-seven-foot model of a steam screw corvette of the nineteenth century, in which all the maneuvers are made to function for demonstration purposes.

<sup>21</sup> Antonio Peral, *El profundo Isaac* (Madrid, 1934).

<sup>22</sup> H. Philip Spratt, *Transatlantic paddle steamers* (Glasgow, 1951), p. 29; 'El Royal William,' *Revista General de Marina* (Madrid), Abril 1948, p. 537.

The second of the courts, Patio B, is devoted to modern naval and merchant vessels, and to the fisheries. The appropriate nets are used as mural decoration. One most instructive model shows the merchant steamer *Infanta Isabel* of 1863 in section. Another represents *España* of 1913, an armorclad of 15,700 tons displacement, and beside it an excellent model of the turbines of 20,000 shaft horsepower used to drive her quadruple screw propellers. The former Atlantic liner *Cristóbal Colón* of 1921 is well represented, also the cruiser *Méndez Núñez* built at El Ferrol in 1923, and modernized in 1947. More recent construction can be seen in the model of the 10,000-ton cruiser *Baleares*, built at El Ferrol in 1936, with turbines of 90,000 horsepower and a speed of 34 knots.

Contrast is provided in the fine fifty-foot specimen of a primitive canoe, hollowed out from a tree trunk in one piece. The most spectacular exhibit in this court, however, is the model (scale one-hundredth) of the Naval School at Pontevedra, which was commenced in 1938 and opened in 1943. This model alone covers a floor area of about 500 square feet. Suspended overhead are models of Spanish naval aircraft. In all, the Museo Naval contains about 170 ship models, which with all the other miscellaneous collections are confined to a total floor area of about 25,000 square feet. The result produces an overcrowded effect (Plate 6) which the Director, Captain Guillén, much deplores.

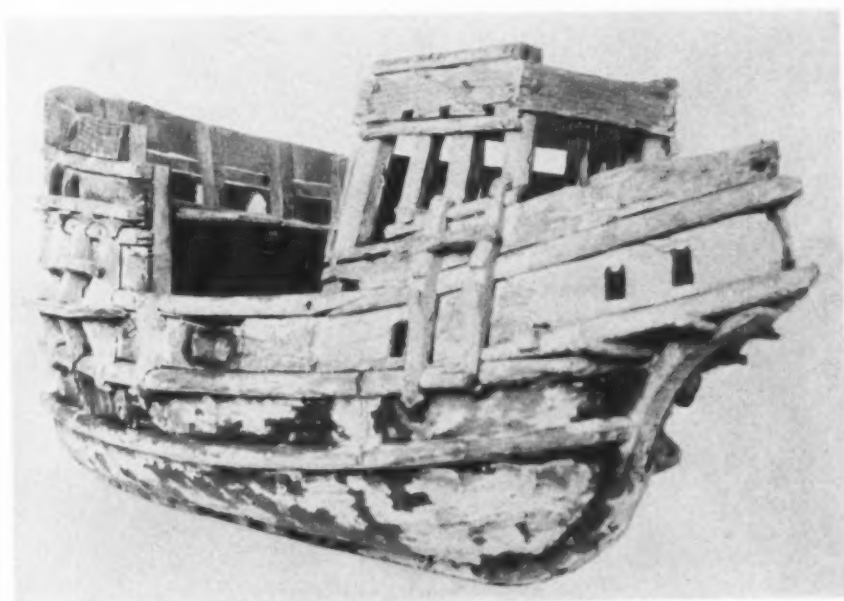
The lecture theater, numbered as Sala XI, is one of the most distinctive that I have ever visited. The walls are adorned with ship stern models and tapestries, all with the infallible Spanish taste for decoration. The hall covers a floor area of about 2,000 square feet and, with the seats removed, it can thus provide space for the special exhibitions which are held at the museum from time to time. For lectures or conferences, seats for 130 are provided on the main floor; and with 45 additional seats in the balcony, a total audience of 175 can be accommodated. The hall is provided with apparatus for sound films, and is much used by the Ministerio de Marina for educational purposes. Lectures on maritime history and related matters are delivered by members of the museum staff and outside authorities, both from Spain and abroad.

In the quiet, comfortable and richly decorated Biblioteca del Museo Naval (Plate 6), available to holders of the museum research card, is preserved the rare and specialized collection of more than 9,000 volumes on maritime history,<sup>23</sup> Spanish for the most part. Only documents and books of a historical nature are retained; modern literature on nautical science is shelved in the main library of the Ministerio de Marina, which contains

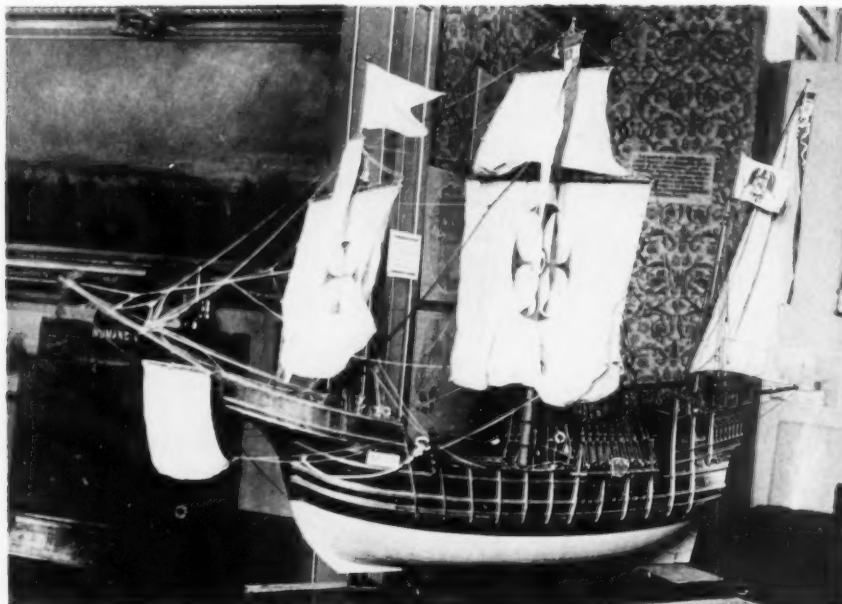
<sup>23</sup> Martín Fernández de Navarrete, *Biblioteca marítima* (Madrid, 1851).



Ministerio de Marina, Madrid



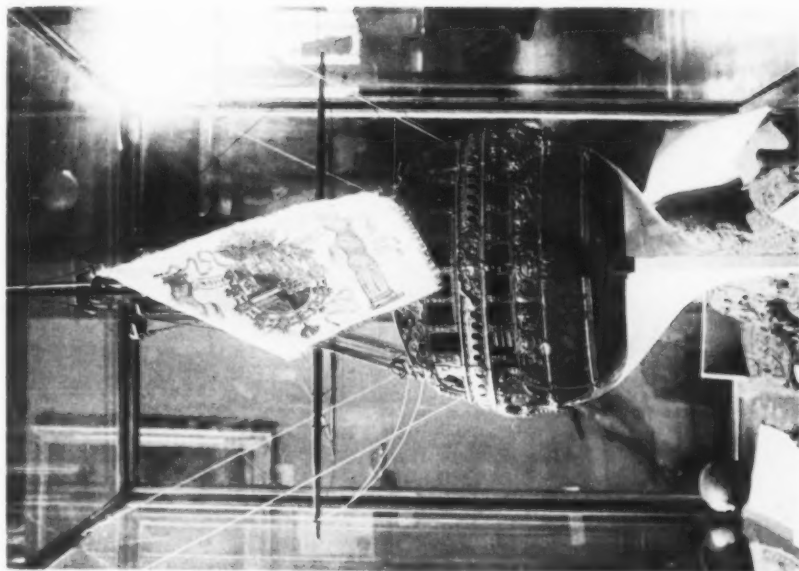
Spanish 'exvoto' of about 1540



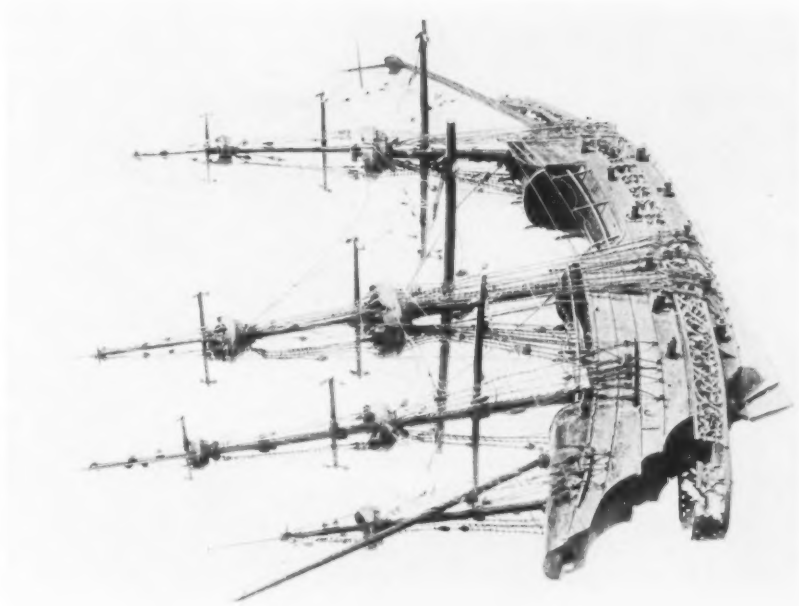
*Santa Maria of Columbus*  
*Model in the Museo Naval, Madrid*



*Santa Maria (after Guillen)*  
*Model in the Museo Naval, Madrid*



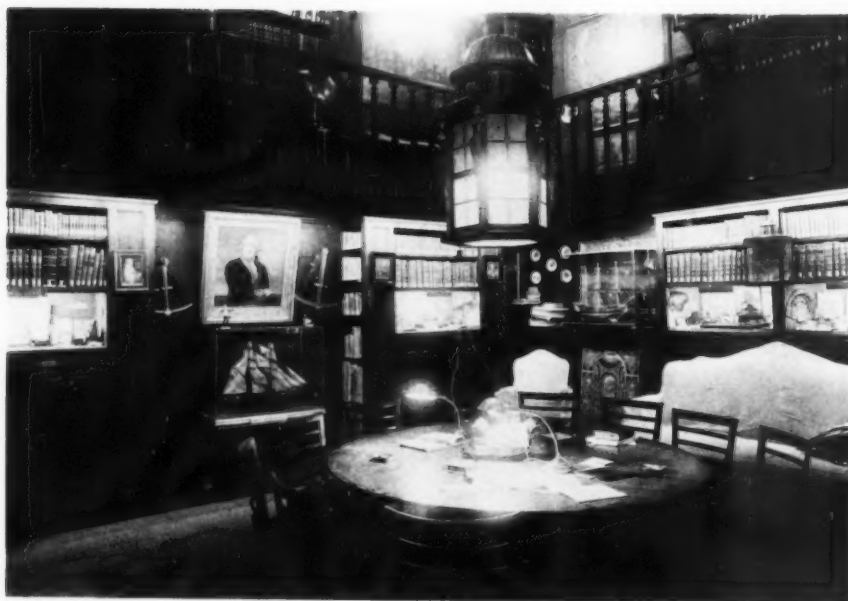
Stern decoration: French influence  
*Model in the Museo Naval, Madrid*



Flemish ship of about 1592  
*Model in the Museo Naval, Madrid*



Patio B. Musco Naval, Madrid



Biblioteca del Museo Naval

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at present about 40,000 volumes. The historical collection in the museum library is all elaborately card indexed and classified. The decimal classification is not used, since the collection is neither of international nor of modern application; but alphabetical catchwords provide a minute sub-classification and seem to produce quick and efficient results.

The librarian, Señorita Matilde Medina, told me that it was not unusual for many of the more important works to have some seven or more cross reference cards in the index, and this therefore constitutes a really valuable instrument for research. Books are shelved on the upper balcony in a simple and efficient manner. Those which I needed to consult were produced without a hitch. The unique collection of about 2,000 volumes of Spanish nautical manuscripts (said to comprise some 100,000 documents, dated from 1134 onwards),<sup>18</sup> many of them acquired from the former Depósito Hidrográfico, are preserved in the private office of the Director.

The museum workshops, not open to the public, are situated near the lecture room, Sala XI. Here are constructed and repaired the ship models and other exhibits for the museum collections. Models and decorative pieces are also prepared for other museums, both in Spain and abroad, and for special exhibitions as occasions arise. There is a skilled modelist and painter, while three trained naval men act as assistants. Sailors are also called in, as required, to help with the less skilled work. The total staff of the museum, under the Director, Capitán Julio F. Guillén, comprises the Sub-director, three other naval officers, the librarian and assistant, the chartsman, three secretaries, the modelist, painter and three assistants. Sailors act as warders in the public exhibition rooms, and sailors from the Ministerio de Marina are also called in for manual assistance as necessary.

The Museo Naval receives a handsome annual allocation from the Casa Real, the Secretaría de Marina, from the Compañías de Guardias Marinas, and numerous private donations. It aims not only to conserve and enrich the collections, but to help research and to popularize all aspects of maritime history and nautical science which fall within the scope of the Ministerio de Marina. To this end are held the public lectures, conferences and special exhibitions already mentioned. Prizes and bourses are also offered for maritime research, and coöperation is maintained with small provincial museums. For instance, I had noticed many models and pictures from the Museo Naval on exhibition in the maritime museum and aquarium at San Sebastián.

Records of attendance in Madrid show about 25,000 visitors per annum, with some thirty classes from the technical schools, and twelve collective visits of industrial workers. One could have hoped for a rather

better frequentation of such fine collections. Perhaps some public indication, or even a little restrained *réclame*, at the entrance could help to attract the more casual visitor from the street. It must be remembered that the Museo Naval at Madrid is so very far removed from its natural element, the sea; more remote even than the Musée de la Marine in Paris.<sup>24</sup> To see a real ship at sea, one must first traverse the vast arid distances of Spain. The railroads are cheap; but the poor man of Madrid can, for one peseta, see these beautiful ships in miniature, ancient and modern. In the Museo Naval he can become a mariner of the spirit.

In conclusion of these notes, I wish to render sincere thanks for the kindness with which I was received in Madrid, for all the facilities accorded to me in the Museo Naval, and in particular for the invaluable help received from the Director, Capitán Julio F. Guillén, and from the librarian, Señorita Matilde Medina. Needless to add, it is by the courtesy of the Museo Naval that the illustrations to this article are reproduced.

<sup>24</sup> H. Philip Spratt, 'Le Musée de la Marine, Paris,' *Mariner's Mirror* (London), January 1938, p. 105.

*H. Philip Spratt, a Londoner, was appointed Assistant Librarian at the Science Museum in 1930. He specializes in steamboat history, and has traveled widely in Europe and North America.*

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## The Unlucky General Armstrong

BY HAROLD A. MOUZON

EVERYONE at all familiar with the naval history of the War of 1812 knows about the privateer *General Armstrong* that fought the bitter, bloody battle at Fayal in the Azores; but few have heard of another privateer *General Armstrong* that sailed from Charleston on her first cruise on Christmas Eve of 1812 and came back into Wilmington, North Carolina, in the spring of 1813 in a veritable cloud of troubles—litigation, recrimination, mutiny and murder. The histories of privateering ignore her; even Coggeshall,<sup>1</sup> who was himself a captain of privateers in the same war, does not mention her. But there were interesting things about her, although her career as a privateer was neither long nor successful. This record has had to be picked out and pieced together from the faded and brittle files of contemporary newspapers, from musty law reports, and from a few scattered documents in the National Archives in Washington.

### I.

We do not know when *General Armstrong* was built or who built her. We do not know how she was rigged or what she looked like, except that she seems always to have been called a 'ship'. We do not know her dimensions except that she was of 205 tons. She carried sixteen six-pounders and a crew of a hundred men (the commission called for 120), but a privateer always carried an extra large complement to furnish crews for prizes. She was owned by John Sinclair, of New York, and John Everingham, of Charleston, who was also the principal owner of the very successful Charleston privateer schooner *Saucy Jack*.<sup>2</sup>

We have no record of when *General Armstrong* began fitting out at

<sup>1</sup> George Coggeshall, *History of the American Privateers and Letters-of-Marque, During Our War with England in the Years 1812, '13 and '14* (New York, 1856).

<sup>2</sup> Record of *General Armstrong's* Commission, National Archives; Records of the Department of the Navy; Records Acquired from the Department of State; Letters from Collectors of Customs Relating to Commissions of Privateers, 1812-15; Privateers, War of 1812, Vol. 2 (RG 45); *The Investigator*, 24 December 1812.

Charleston, but it must have been a lengthy process. On 5 November 1812, William Livingston was signed on as sailing master.<sup>3</sup> The President's commission dated 23 November named John Sinclair as captain and David Pearce as lieutenant.<sup>4</sup> She did not sail until Christmas Eve, on what was intended to be a four months' cruise. *The City Gazette and Commercial Daily Advertiser* for Christmas Day gave the event a somewhat less than enthusiastic notice:

After thundering the notes of preparation for several months, the privateer ship *General Armstrong*, Captain Sinclair, at length has put to sea. If the length of her cruise equals that of her fitting out, she must be a fortunate sailor if not a swift one. We wish her much success and fewer rebuffs at sea than she has met on shore—May she return with rich prizes and lawful ones, and may her crew be enabled another year to enjoy a *Merry Christmas*.

A search of available newspapers fails to reveal the nature of the 'rebuffs' which had so delayed *General Armstrong*, but considering what was to come it seems a pity that she did not delay a little longer and let her crew enjoy Christmas in Charleston before embarking on what was to be a melancholy voyage. The *Gazette's* wishes for 'rich prizes and lawful ones' have a distinctly ironic tinge in the light of later developments.

On 11 March the *Charleston Courier* reported that *General Armstrong* was spoken on 15 January in lat. 32° N., long. 44° 50' W. Then on 19 March Charleston read in the *Times* that the ship *Sapor* had arrived in New York on 2 March with this story:

On the passage, was boarded by the privateer *Gen. Armstrong, Sinclair, of Charleston*, of 16 guns, last from France. She had taken a Spanish vessel, which had been captured by the British from the Algerines. The *Gen. Armstrong* detained the *Sapor* several hours, searched the ship, and broke open several letters, and threatened to send her into France.

This seems impossible to reconcile with an item in the same newspaper on 29 March:

The brig *Amazon*, Phillips, of Philadelphia, 46 days from Cadiz, has arrived in New York. Feb. 23, lat. 26, long. 54, was boarded by the *General Armstrong, privateer, Capt. Sinclair*, 16 days from New-London—had made no captures, and had lost his stern-boat while chased by a British frigate.

There must be some confusion here, of dates or places or both. It is clear, however, that *General Armstrong* had struck out boldly across the Atlantic instead of doing her hunting in the British West Indies, as was the usual

<sup>3</sup> *United States v. The Matilda*, Fed. Cas. No. 15, 741.

<sup>4</sup> Record of Commission.

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practice of the Charleston privateers. If bold, *General Armstrong's* tactics were not profitable. No more is heard of her Spanish prize, and what appears to have been her only British prize never made port.

Charleston first heard of this prize in a brief item in the *Gazette* of 19 April, but in a few days there was a fuller account in the same paper in the form of a dispatch from Georgetown, some sixty miles north of Charleston on the South Carolina coast, dated 21 April. It told of the loss of *Armstrong's* prize, the brig *Tartar* from St. Barts laden with 160 puncheons of rum. Fleeing into Georgetown harbor from a British brig of war, she struck on North Island, bilged and broke up, some of her cargo being taken off by *Orion* and some floating ashore.

The same issue of the *Gazette* carried a dispatch from Wilmington, North Carolina, dated 17 April:

Arrived at this port last evening, the privateer ship *General Armstrong*, of Charleston, from which port she sailed on the 24th Dec. 1812, on a cruise for four months, but after experiencing every hardship, &c. which will hereafter be given, the crew were obliged to turn her back to the westward.

## II.

It would soon become apparent that the somewhat peculiar phrasing of the above item was quite accurate. It was her crew, and not Captain Sinclair, who had turned *General Armstrong* to the westward and brought her into Wilmington. This was made clear in the following from the *Wilmington Gazette* of 24 April, reprinted in the Charleston papers:

In our last, we mentioned the arrival of the Privateer Ship *General Armstrong*. The day after her arrival, Capt. Sinclair, who was also half owner and who had been confined to the Cabin for 28 days, by the crew, was liberated. He laid his complaint before T. N. Gautier, Commandant on this Station, charging the crew with mutiny, &c. demanding their arrest for trial. There was some difficulty in getting them to consent to surrender themselves. A request was made to the Captains of the Volunteer Companies to call out their men in aid of the Officers of the United States, which was done with great promptness. A general and considerable alarm was excited, but fortunately, it was not necessary to board the ship to compel the crew to submit to the authority of the law; they at last yielded, and are now in confinement on board the gun-boats, awaiting the court martial which must decide on their conduct. Subsequent to their arrest of the Captain, two prizes were taken, which may possibly raise a question involving piracy. The above is but a brief summary.<sup>5</sup>

Let us examine in more detail the events of which 'the above is but a brief summary.'

<sup>5</sup> Wilmington, N. C., *Gazette*, 24 April 1813, quoted in *Charleston Times*, 29 April, and *City Gazette and Commercial Daily Advertiser*, 30 April.

We do not know just how or why trouble first started on the ship, but on 22 February Captain Sinclair placed the sailing master, William Livingston, under arrest for disobedience to orders.<sup>6</sup> Possibly this was the first step in the differences between the captain and the majority of his officers and crew which broke out into open revolt on 18 March. According to a statement made by Captain Sinclair after arrival in Wilmington, the ship was then ten days out from Brava, in the Cape Verde Islands, in lat.  $21^{\circ} 49' N.$ , long.  $23^{\circ} 23' W.$  from meridian of London, with the Isle of Sal 312 miles distant, Cape Blanco 356 miles distant, and Teneriffe 542 miles to the northeast. According to the same statement the ship was 'steering on a wind So. by E. Variation more than 1 Pt. North [?], destined to touch at Teneriffe to furnish such stores as were expended unless we fell in with them before, which from the situation we were sailing in was very probable.' Provisions on board amounted to 3 cwt. of bread, 4 barrels of peas,  $3\frac{1}{2}$  tierces of rice, 2,100 pounds at least, and  $1\frac{1}{4}$  barrels of flour, making 'bread kind' enough for forty-four days' rations, besides  $1\frac{1}{2}$  firkins of butter,  $1\frac{1}{2}$  barrels of molasses,  $2\frac{1}{2}$  boxes of sweet oil (30 bottles), and 23 or more barrels of best salt beef and pork. So bounteous were the supplies, according to Captain Sinclair, that there were landed at Wilmington 10 barrels of salt meat, 2 barrels of peas,  $1\frac{1}{2}$  tierces of rice, and a box of oil, vinegar and other stores.<sup>7</sup>

A very different picture was painted in the 'Memorial' which was printed in the *Wilmington Gazette* at the request of Master's Mate Charles Cromwell. It was said to have been signed by six master's mates, gunner, boatswain, carpenter, three mates, quartermaster, and fifty-one seamen and marines, belonging to *General Armstrong*, and constituting nearly three fourths of her crew. Captain Sinclair said later that there were actually only fifty-two signatures to the memorial;<sup>8</sup> but the question would seem to be academic, since he charged eighty of his officers and crew with mutiny.<sup>9</sup> The memorial is a rather remarkable document which seems worthy of quotation in full. It is said to have been 'handed Captain Sinclair, on board the American private armed ship *General Armstrong*, latitude  $22.03$ , N. longitude  $25$ , W. at Meridian, Thursday, 18th March, 1813'; and it reads:

<sup>6</sup> *U. S. v. Matilda*.

<sup>7</sup> Statement by Capt. Sinclair, National Archives, Records of the Department of the Navy; Office of the Secretary of the Navy; Miscellaneous Letters Received, 1801-1884; Miscellaneous Letters, 1813, Vol. 3 (RG 45), hereafter cited as Miscellaneous Letters.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>9</sup> Arrest Warrant, Miscellaneous Letters, 1813, Vol. 3.

Captain John Sinclair.

Sir—Eleven days have now elapsed since we left the Isle of Brava, all of which time we have been endeavoring to get to the Eastward; but our prospects are *now* no better than they were in our opinion of effecting such a thing when we started. For the ground we *gained* the evening before our coming to anchor in Brava, convinced us fully of the impracticability of our being able to work to windward among those Islands, without getting a slant or two of wind; and should your object have been to touch at one of the Canaries you would doubtless have stood well to the northward first, so as to have got out of the Trade Winds. Your intention surely cannot be to touch at one of the Cape de Verds, where you were apprized of a British squadron being among those Islands, which caused you to quit Brava in the manner you did, without purchasing any supplies for the remainder of the cruise; well knowing the situation of our stores, not now having above 100 lbs. *bread, two and a half tierces of rice, two barrels cow peas and one barrel of flour*—water we had abundance of, say upon a moderate calculation 6000 gallons, and yet allowed only two quarts per man a day, and one quart per week to boil rice or peas with. Great discontent (and God knows not without sufficient cause) which has for some time past prevailed on board among both officers and men. *Starvation now staring us in the face, for we are fully convinced your intention is to go on the coast of Africa. Languor and weakness* already having possession of half of the crew, and that among the best of us, induces us to apprise you that we are aware of the situation we are likely to be placed in, even allowing that fortune should throw another prize within our grasp, and she be of half the force of the one we lost; we hesitate not to say that she will also slip through our fingers. If your intention has not been of a nature that may prove fatal to us, it has excited much alarm. Why did you not purchase (for you said you could) sufficient supplies at Brava? and not attempt to *gull* us with the *story* of a 'British squadron being off those Isles.'

But, sir, we are fully convinced that *all is not clear on your part*. The privations we have put up with, from the commencement of the cruise, will convince mankind, when they come to be fully stated (and that they will one day or other,) that we have done more than any commander of a private cruising ship could or would have expected from his crew, and still you would wish to make us more than slaves. Allowing, sir, you were at Africa, *you could purchase there no more than what you could at Brava; and the time it will take us to get on the coast will terminate our cruise*. And (from threats you have thrown out) there is no doubt but many there are among us that you may have in your power, on whom you will execute them, *if we have or may take any step that you may think improper*. Be it so. In our *native country* we are ready at any and all times to have an investigation of our proceedings—*But not trust to your clemency* in a strange land, among a lot of Turks or Africans. But, sir, a presumption as strong as holy writ, and the *first law in nature*, bids us *shape our course home*, and that presumption is, sir, *that there are a hundred chances to one but we will fall in with one or more English cruizers on the coast*; and then, sir, would it take much philosophy to tell what would become of us? A prison ship—for life—for there would be no exchange under two years, and it is not likely one of us would weather that time out; or, if by superior sailing, we should run away we must starve to death. *The crisis demands that we*

go to the Westward, and the prospect far better for both owners and crew. In fact in taking the one (going home) we have great hopes of doing better. In the other, *the horrors of a prison ship on a coast that is known to be fatal to strangers at the coming season, or starvation on board our own ship*—by standing to the westward, should we fall in with any supplies, *let us stay out untill the cruize expires*—If not let us proceed to the United States. Trusting you will consider seriously the dreadful situation you are about placing us in, and without the most singular interposition of Divine Providence *will prove a total loss to yourself and owners*—We say, we trust you will shape our course towards the United States, or if you think we can get to France before our provisions be out, go thither—In so doing, we are willing and at all times ready to obey your commands.

This was the document which Captain Sinclair described as 'a paper replete with Falsehoods, Aspersions, insult and threats.'<sup>10</sup> Cromwell's account, in the Wilmington paper, of its reception by the captain is the more dramatic for its very simplicity:

After the above Memorial was presented to Captain Sinclair, he called several of the officers into the cabin and after one hour's full deliberation with them, capt. S. came on the gun-deck and addressed all hands, (who were assembled aft in a peaceable manner) saying, 'Gentlemen, what means this mustering aft.' he was told 'to know your determination upon the memorial'—he said 'this was no time, wait until morning.' He was answered 'that would be losing too much time, as he could as well agree to our wishes now as any other time, and requested him to turn the ship's head to the westward and navigate her home, as starvation was staring us in the face, or if he would not we should.' He then said he 'would not, but the moment we did, he would retire to his cabin.' One and all then sung out 'put the helm up, put the helm up,' which was immediately done and the ship's head put to the westward. Captain Sinclair going into his cabin, was asked what he was going there for, whether it was for his sword or what? He replied it is for my sword and I'll run the first man through; accordingly as he entered his cabin, the doors were secured, and those officers with him kept there until next day.<sup>11</sup>

One of these officers presumably was James Johnston, who was later to testify that he was first lieutenant of the vessel and that he was 'confined in the wardroom with liberty to go on deck, but to have no communication with the crew.'<sup>12</sup> David Pearce, the lieutenant named in the privateer's commission, must already have been demoted. Perhaps he had been put under arrest like the sailingmaster, William Livingston; at any rate Captain Sinclair later charged him as one of the mutineers.<sup>13</sup> Livingston

<sup>10</sup> Statement by Capt. Sinclair, Miscellaneous Letters, 1813, Vol. 3.

<sup>11</sup> Clipping from Wilmington, N. C., *Gazette*, Miscellaneous Letters, 1813, Vol. 3; *City Gazette and Commercial Daily Advertiser*, 14 May 1813.

<sup>12</sup> *U. S. v. Matilda*.

<sup>13</sup> Arrest Warrant, Miscellaneous Letters, 1813, Vol. 3.

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no doubt was one of the leaders in the outbreak. He and Cromwell were described by the captain as the 'principals or chieftains' of the mutineers, and they put Livingston in command of the ship.<sup>14</sup>

### III.

Obviously convinced of the rightness of their cause, the mutineers headed straight for home. On the way they took two prizes and ordered them into Wilmington, North Carolina, where *General Armstrong* herself arrived on the evening of 16 April 1813. Livingston promptly next morning went ashore and reported to the Collector of Customs, Robert Cochran, who sent a deputy marshal on board the ship for Captain Sinclair. He emerged from his cabin blazing with fury against those who had kept him shut up there for a month.<sup>15</sup>

After talking with Captain Sinclair, Mr. Cochran was of the opinion that the matter should be referred to the naval authorities, then represented in Wilmington by Lieutenant Thomas N. Gautier commanding four of that swarm of futile gunboats which Mr. Jefferson had inflicted upon the United States Navy a few years before. To him Mr. Cochran addressed this communication:

The private armed Ship *General Armstrong* having arrived under such circumstances as require inquiry as to certain disorders which appear to have prevailed on board induces me to request you to meet me at my office today at such time as may be convenient to you in order to examine into the premises. The 15th Section of the act of Congress concerning letters of marque and reprisal providing for the interference of the officers of the Navy of the U. States in which capacity I now ask your attention.<sup>16</sup>

It developed that Gautier was temporarily absent from Wilmington, and Captain Sinclair was in no mood for delay. He applied to two justices of the peace, John Hogg and William Cutler, who issued a warrant to the sheriff of New Hanover County for the arrest of eighty officers, seamen and marines of *General Armstrong* upon the charge of mutiny. Before the warrant was executed Lieutenant Gautier came back and it was turned over to him, 'he being thought by counsel as the proper person when present to make or cause the arrest.' Before acting Gautier 'requested a line' from Captain Sinclair, who complied as follows:

<sup>14</sup> Statement by Capt. Sinclair, Miscellaneous Letters, 1813, Vol. 3; *U. S. v. Matilda*.

<sup>15</sup> *Wilmington Gazette*, 24 April 1813, quoted in *Charleston Times*, 29 April, and *City Gazette*, 30 April; Capt. Sinclair's footnote to Arrest Warrant, Miscellaneous Letters, 1813, Vol. 3.

<sup>16</sup> National Archives, Records of the Department of the Navy; Office of the Secretary of the Navy; Letters from Officers of Rank below That of Commander, 1813, Vol. 1 (RG 45), hereafter cited as Letters from Officers.

You will perceive by my declaration made and sworn to before two Justices of the Peace at the Court house of this town and now furnished you, that the Private Ship of War *General Armstrong* of which I am the only legal Commander and largely concerned in as Owner, and which Ship is now lying at Anchor in the Stream of this Port, was on the 18th of March last, forcibly, feloniously and piratically taken possession of by the Officers, Seamen & c. in said declaration named, who at the same time confined me and others of my Officers and Crew, and who have since kept me confined in the most rigorous, wanton, Cruel and unprovoked manner, from said 18th day of March until this day, when I was relieved by the Civil Authorities, they in the meantime directing and converting my said Ship on Such Courses and to such purposes as they saw fit, Capturing, detaining, overhauling and plundering such vessels as they met without any legal Authority to such Acts. I have therefore to request you, as Commandant of the Naval force of the United States on this Station, to cause said offenders to be arrested and confined in such manner and in such place as you may Judge Expedient, until they may be brought before a Court Martial, then to answer for the Crimes, felonies and Piracies they have respectively and collectively done and committed.<sup>17</sup>

The alleged mutineers seem to have acted at all times with calmness and deliberation and a considerable degree of dignity. They made a formal statement to Captain Sinclair of their grievances and their demands. They sailed the ship to a port of their own country and reported at once to the civil authorities. This is not the conduct of violent and lawless men; and the blame for the seemingly hysterical alarm in Wilmington and the turning out of the volunteer companies to aid the Navy against *Armstrong's* people must be charged to the furious Captain Sinclair. He obviously regarded those who had shut him in his cabin as a lot of bloody-minded pirates and he had impressed this view on Gautier. To the officer commanding each of the gunboats the latter issued the following order:

Sir: You will repair on board the private Ship of War *General Armstrong* and take out such mutineers as shall be pointed out to you by Captain St. Clair & confine them on board the Gun boat under your command. You will allow no liquor to be given them & if any disobedience of your orders should take place you will detain the offender immediately & regulate your proceedings agreeable to the rules of the Navy until further orders.

To the prospective prisoners Gautier gave this order:

You will consider yourself under an arrest agreeable to the rules & regulations of the U. S. Navy for disobedience of orders contempt of your superior officer & mutiny. You will hold yourself accountable to a Court Martial for said charges. Repair on board Gunboat No. ——— under charge of Commander ———.<sup>18</sup>

<sup>17</sup> Arrest Warrant, with Capt. Sinclair's Footnote and Letter to Gautier, Miscellaneous Letters, 1813, Vol. 3; Letter also in Letters from Officers, 1813, Vol. 1.

<sup>18</sup> Letters from Officers, 1813, Vol. 1.

Which in all likelihood the mutineers promptly and obediently did; and the volunteer companies were dismissed, feeling perhaps a little silly. Gautier, however, apparently remained convinced that he had very dangerous men to deal with and made his arrangements accordingly. They were to have a tragic consequence. He left ten of the prisoners on *Armstrong* and distributed the rest among the four gunboats. He then gave these instructions to his subordinate officers:

Mr. Manson, I need not point out to you how necessary it is that every care should be taken that none of the prisoners escape, for which purpose I request a guard to be rowed round the Boats and ship *General Armstrong* every night, during the hours of eight at night and daylight. You will direct the guard boat to-night; Mr. Hadamy 2d, Mr. Evans 3d, and Mr. Wolfington 4th. You will suffer no intercourse between the prisoners from one boat to the other, nor any shore boat but by your permission to come along side. You will keep in view, I expect the assistance of all the officers in the execution of the duties devolved on us. I shall give the officers of the night the guard word at 4 o'clock each evening.

An early result of this arrangement was the shooting and killing of Captain John S. Oliver, evidently a retired mariner, who 'carried on the mercantile business in Wilmington.' He was put in charge of *General Armstrong* by her owners and, according to news from Wilmington in the Charleston papers, was brutally killed as he rowed ashore one night, when he failed to obey the summons of the naval guard. Sailing Master Evans, commanding *Gunboat No. 157*, whose brother was captain of the frigate *Chesapeake*, and Midshipman M'Chesney, who did the actual shooting, were both arrested and charged with murder. There was an ominous note in the comment of the Wilmington newspaper:

When an officer acts with insolence, and, with impunity, exercises the duties of his office cruelly and tyrannically, as the conductors of a public journal we should feel ourselves bound to animadvert with severity on his conduct; we should take pleasure in being the instrument of bringing him before the tribunal of the public, and by a just exposure aid in inflicting on him the punishment of general indignation and deserved odium. But, whenever the commission of an act involves him in a criminal prosecution and particularly when it may lead to the result of an ignominious death, we should observe a most scrupulous adherence to a naked narration of facts, neither mitigating nor heightening the circumstances which led to it. The even hand of Justice should not be shaken by passion, or unnerved by partiality. We are persuaded that Mr. Evans, with whatever feelings he may look back on the late melancholy occurrence, will not have reason to regret, that this town may be the scene of his public trial.—He will not find the citizens of Wilmington forgetful of the respect they owe themselves or the justice which will be due to him.<sup>19</sup>

<sup>19</sup> *Times*, 29 April 1813; *City Gazette*, 29 April and 10 May 1813.

## IV.

But in addition to charges of mutiny and murder *General Armstrong* had stirred up still more complicated legal questions. It will be remembered that she had taken two prizes after the crew had removed Captain Sinclair from the command. One appears to have been the schooner *Commerce*, of which we hear no more than that her master was tried in the District Court at Wilmington and acquitted of a charge of violating the Non-Importation Law.<sup>20</sup> The other was the schooner *Matilda*, of Newbern, North Carolina. She was taken by *General Armstrong* on 5 April and ordered into Wilmington, where she arrived on 19 April. Captain Sinclair sent his lieutenant aboard 'to take an inventory of the effects, and to dispossess the mutineers,' and in due course proceedings were instituted for the condemnation of the schooner and her cargo. The case came on to be heard early in May in the United States District Court in Wilmington and naturally excited considerable interest in Charleston, where a newspaper account of the trial said:

The material facts appearing in evidence, were these—that some time before the capture, the Captain of the privateer had been confined and under arrest, by some of his officers and crew, and so continued confined at the time of her capture—that when the master of the schooner brought his papers on board he presented to the person then exercising command, the usual Custom House documents and clearances, for a Neutral port—the privateer at the time wearing British colors. On perusal of these papers, the person in command pretending the privateer was British, observed he must send him in; and that he must immediately bring his things on board—whereupon, the master of the schooner drew from his pocket a British License, protecting a trade direct to British ports, whereon, according to the requisites of the British regulation, the name of the vessel and master were endorsed. He was then informed that he was on board an American cruiser, and that his vessel would be taken as having a British License on board, and trading with the enemy. The schooner was accordingly captured, and sent into this port. Another British License was afterwards found in the Master's trunk, protecting to British ports, with liberty to touch at a Neutral port, but without any endorsement thereon, a circumstance, by the British regulations, rendering it wholly ineffective. There was also a letter from the owner to the master, mentioning the rising of the Congress—that nothing had been done in the License, nor Importation Bills; that therefore, in his returns, he must take care to guard against his own government.

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The condemnation was urged by the Libellants, on the grounds of her being in the course of an actual trade with the enemy, and sailing under the sanction of a Foreign License. The Claimants, in defence, denied that any part of the evidence justified

<sup>20</sup> *City Gazette*, 14 May 1813.

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the legal conclusion of a trading with the enemy, there must have been an actual entrance into his ports; so that, even if in this case there were an intention to go to an enemy's port, until that intention was consummated, no punishment was incurred. But, at all events, that as at the time of the capture, the Captain of the privateer being under arrest, and the crew in a state of mutiny, the powers of the Commission under which she cruised, was at least so far suspended, as during an arrest of the Commander, legally to disqualify her from making captures.

It was an ironical circumstance of the trial that a principal witness for the libelants was William Livingston, chosen captain by the mutineers, called to prove the facts justifying *Matilda's* capture, while the claimants put up Captain Sinclair to testify that at the time of the capture he had been deprived of his command and his liberty by Livingston and his mutinous associates. Sinclair abated none of his hostility toward the mutineers to serve his own financial interest, but testified emphatically as to their villainous doings and 'that he would not from his knowledge of the general character of Livingston, believe him on oath.'

The District Court held that the evidence proved that *Matilda* was trading with the enemy and therefore subject to seizure, but that the seizure by *General Armstrong* was illegal and invalid because of the displacement by the mutineers of the lawfully commissioned officers of the privateer. The Court accordingly dismissed the libel, but without decreeing the return of *Matilda* to the claimants, her owners.<sup>21</sup>

There was a prompt appeal to the Circuit Court of the United States at Raleigh and a prompt hearing before no less a legal dignitary than the Chief Justice of the United States, John Marshall. He agreed with the District Court that *Matilda* was trading with the enemy and on the other point, the legality of the capture, he said:

The president's commission was the authority under which the capture was made; this commission authorizes John Sinclair the captain, to seize, etc., but the evidence is that the captain, at the time of capture, was, by the violence of the crew, put in close confinement and deprived of all command and authority over the ship.

... The libel is filed in the name of the United States for the use of the owner, officers and crew of the ship. Had it been in the name of the crew only, according to the truth of the case, the objection then would have been, that you have departed from the commission, which was their authority to seize. And taking the case as it stands, it appears a little awkward for the United States to sanction an act that necessarily springs from another which they have said, by the legislature, shall be punished with death. The crew in a state of mutiny made the capture: mutiny is punished with death. And is it competent for the captain to contradict the fact, and now allege that he made the capture, or that it was made with his consent? Or shall he

<sup>21</sup> *Times*, 26 May 1813; *U. S. v. Matilda*.

now give a right to himself by relation, and make valid that which was unlawful at the time? The court inclines to a negative answer.

The Circuit Court affirmed the decree of the District Court and also ordered the return of *Matilda* to her owners.<sup>22</sup> That was the end of the case as a matter of law, but the *National Intelligencer*, of Washington, printed a column and a half of comment by a legal pundit writing under the name of 'Philonomus.' He was not very complimentary to either of the courts. The District Court, having correctly found that *Matilda* was trading with the enemy and therefore good prize, should have awarded her to someone and not stopped with holding that she did not belong to the libelants, the owners and crew of *General Armstrong*. The District Court's decree was not final and therefore not appealable, which made the proceedings in the Circuit Court void. Furthermore, the Chief Justice had erred in returning *Matilda* to her owners. Having declared her subject to seizure, he should have heard further argument as to whether she belonged to the United States or to the part of the *Armstrong's* crew who had not joined the mutiny.<sup>23</sup>

#### V.

If the outcome of this trial was a disappointment to Captain Sinclair, it was a small matter compared to what was happening at Wilmington at about the same time.

As we have seen, the naval authorities at Wilmington had arrested the greater part of *General Armstrong's* crew on Captain Sinclair's charges of mutiny. There were so many culprits that a printed form was used for the statement of the charges against each of them. One sample will suffice for all.

#### EXHIBITION OF CHARGES

Against William Livingston belonging to the private armed ship *General Armstrong*, owned by Mr. John Everingham of Charleston South Carolina and John Sinclair, New York

John Sinclair, charges that he was and is commander of the private armed ship *General Armstrong* belonging to John Everingham of Charleston S. C. and the said John Sinclair. That said ship was fitted out at the port of Charleston, S. C., in the United States, that a certain William Livingston shipped on board said ship as Master on or about the Fifth day of November 1812 to cruise against the Enemies of the United States of America for four months as per articles—that on or about the Eighteenth day of March in the year 1813 and for divers days afterwards, at sea, and

<sup>22</sup> *U. S. v. Matilda*.

<sup>23</sup> *Times*, 15 June 1813.

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during the continuance of said cruise the said William Livingston did make a mutiny on board said ship, and the said William Livingston with divers others belonging to said ship did, with force and arms, deprive the said John Sinclair of his command, and put him into confinement on board the said ship . . . that the said William Livingston . . . did attempt to make a mutiny on board the ship General Armstrong, and did attempt to deprive the said John Sinclair of his command on board said ship . . . that the said William Livingston . . . did utter in the hearing of the crew belonging to said ship seditious and mutinous words against the said John Sinclair, to deprive him of his command . . . that the said William Livingston . . . concealed and connived at seditious and mutinous practices of the officers and crew of said ship General Armstrong when on said cruise . . . that the said William Livingston . . . refused to obey the orders of said John Sinclair . . . that the said William Livingston . . . did rebel against the said John Sinclair and his authority . . . that the said William Livingston with divers others, did take forcible possession of said ship General Armstrong, from the said John Sinclair, and brought her against the will of the said John Sinclair into the Port of Wilmington, North Carolina.<sup>24</sup>

This formidable document is signed by John Sinclair with such flourishes and curlicues as might be thought to imply an especial animus against Sailing Master Livingston were it not that a similar 'Exhibition of Charges' against simple John Murphy, O. S., bears an even more flamboyantly decorated signature.<sup>25</sup> The whole sheaf of 'Exhibitions,' one presumably for each of the eighty rebels, with supporting documents, must have made an impressive bundle when they were sent to Secretary of the Navy William Jones.

It would be extremely interesting to know the considerations which moved Secretary Jones to the course which he took with regard to the mutiny charges, but there is little hope of this unless his letter of instructions to Gautier at Wilmington should be brought to light. The result of his letter appeared in an item of marine news in the Charleston papers of Friday, 28 May 1813:

Arrived yesterday, in 40 hours from Wilmington, N. C., in a Whale Boat, Mr. C. Cromwell and three other Officers and one seaman, late of the Privateer Ship *General Armstrong*, of this port; who, together with the greater part of the crew, had been arrested by Commodore Gautier on their arrival in that port, on a charge of mutiny, which was left to the Secretary of the Navy—who, upon his getting a statement of the matter, ordered the Commander to discharge the crew from the said vessel, which was accordingly done on Tuesday morning last.<sup>26</sup>

Considering the space which would have been given to this news in a

<sup>24</sup> Letters from Officers, 1813, Vol. 1.

<sup>25</sup> Miscellaneous Letters, 1813, Vol. 3.

<sup>26</sup> *Times*, 28 May 1813; *City Gazette*, 28 May 1813; *Charleston Courier*, 29 May 1813.

paper of today, we could wish that we had at least been told the reasons for the Secretary's action. They certainly were not satisfactory to Captain Sinclair. Witness his letter of 29 May to Secretary Jones.

My different reports already transmitted you by Thomas N. Gautier, Esq., of which I now enclose you Copies as far as they were by me addressed to that Gentleman in the first instance, and the letters of Mr. Cochran Collector of this district being in your possession, it would be Superfluous to say more at present on the Subject of my Complaint against the Mutinous part of the Officers and Crew of the Gen. Armstrong than that no pages have ever appeared before me of such unprovoked, Cruel and high handed proceedings as have been exhibited on board of said Ship, of which I was not only Constitutionally appointed Commander, but largely Concerned in as owner.

The Memorial/as it is termed by the Mutineers/which they have published, I send you a printed copy of, was handed to, or rather thrown at me, at Half past five o'clock on the Evening of the 18th March, and the ship taken possession of at half past 6 o'clock the same evening. The tenor of that paper fully Evinces/in my opinion/the premeditation of their Subsequent Conduct or worse intentions, that is of the design of the leaders of the faction, and for which I believe the Comments of Cromwell at foot of said Memorial will afford no apology.—if more is wanting, I can furnish to you Sir and to the world the most incontrovertible and consequently the most Satisfactory proofs of the perfidiousness of these wretches, but being yourself an experienced Marine Character, I leave it for you to Judge from the Complexion of the printed Copy now enclosed you, in what point of view the Original can be Justly held—And have to request you will inform me—if everything has been fairly Stated, on what grounds I am left without relief by the Prisoners in Charge of Captain Gautier being Set at liberty without duly advising me how to proceed against them other than of his telling me it was the Hon. Secretary of the Navy's order he Should do so—and that I must apply to the Civil Authority to what Civil Authority he says not, Civil Authority of the United States there is none here/at least it is thought so/and the Magistracy of the town have refused to take further Cognizance in this business as the prisoners were in Charge of the United States Marine Authority—which they and Professional Gentlemen here—consider the only Competent Authority to take Cognizance of Such Offences,—be who may be right, be who may be wrong—I was left without Redress, and the Villains, who had taken my vessel, imprisoned my person and wantonly Sported with my feelings and my property Suffered Insultingly to cross the ferry and Evade the punishment due to their Crimes, having been turned loose at the early hour of half past five o'clock in the morning before I could avail myself of the only Opportunity left me of detaining them, by Arrest on Civil Process, until other means could be devised to arrest them Criminally, the district Attorney being at the time your order for their release was notified to me on the 24th Inst. 300 Miles from this, there was Consequently no time afforded to make application to him, and the prisoners were released next morning at the early hour above stated. Had the Written Opinion of the Honourable Attorney General accompany'd your instructions, to Captain Gautier,

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all difficulty would have vanished, not only with the Magistracy here, but with the district Attorney, should he have doubts on this occasion—on which I understand he, whilst attending the district Court in this town, gave his Opinion far different from that of conveying to me an Idea, that he will cause them to be Arrested, unless warranted So to do by the Written opinion of Mr. Pinckney,<sup>27</sup> which I will Esteem a favour you transmit as early as possible—if the Case is decidedly such as is not embraced by the 15th Section of the Act of Congress passed on the 12th June 1812 Concerning Letters of Marque and Prize Goods.

Mr. Collector Cochran, who has deliberately read my Journal & c. will probably write you again on this subject, and I believe he, as well as many others, who have made themselves Acquainted with the Circumstances of my Crews most Villainous Conduct, and Cruelties towards me whilst in Confinement, Consider as highly necessary, that an Example be made proportionate to Such Crimes: to Satisfy Justice and deter others from Such Acts of Wanton Wickedness in future.

I have the honour—Sir—to be personally known to more than One of the Gentlemen that fill the highest departments around you, but more particularly to the Honourable John Armstrong.<sup>28</sup> I shall cease to refer you to him for any particular recommendation of me—but it may be to you satisfactory to learn from him, that I am not a man of such stamp as to trouble on unimportant Occasions, the heads of departments that have already business of the first importance to attend to—And I trust Sir: you will allow it is of the highest importance to me, as a man who has so far Conducted himself through the various walks of life as I have done, without tarnishing his honour or his reputation to fix a proper value upon either, to the preserving them Spotless in the eyes of Mankind, as it respects his Professional Conduct and Moral Character, both of which has been attacked and can only be restored to their Original Standard in public Opinion by an investigation of this business/as is the Case with me/—as the tribunal before which these Agressors may have their trial, will also Serve as a Court of inquiry of my Conduct on my late Cruize—and I trust I Shall not fail of my wishes on that Score. Justice and my Countrys Good Says I should not.<sup>29</sup>

If this letter is over wordy, it is the wordiness of a man seething with righteous indignation. If the Secretary of the Navy had dropped the case against the mutineers, Captain Sinclair did not approve. Cromwell and his fellows, it would seem, were well advised to head out from Wilmington by the first available transport, even an open whaleboat.

## VI.

The departure of the mutineers, however, still left untried the murder charge against the slayers of the unfortunate Captain Oliver. It was 31 Oc-

<sup>27</sup> William Pinkney, Attorney General of the United States.

<sup>28</sup> Secretary of War, for whom the privateer was named.

<sup>29</sup> Miscellaneous Letters, 1813, Vol. 3.

tober 1813, six months after the shooting, before they were arraigned in the Superior Court at Wilmington. Sailing Master Evans was tried first. As the newspapers reported the evidence it showed:

That the crew (of *General Armstrong*) with the exception of ten were taken out of the ship and distributed among the several gun-boats, one of which the defendant commanded—That for the greater security of the prisoners, guard-boats were ordered to row round the ship and gun-boats during the night, of which public notice was given by an advertisement under the Court-House; Captain Oliver had determined to set this order at defiance, as he had freely declared—That the deceased was employed by the agent of the ship to take care of her—That he usually visited her every evening between sun-down and dark—That about 8 o'clock on the night of the fatal accident, Capt. Evans, then commanding one of the gun-boats, observed a boat put off from the ship, which he pursued and hailed, 'What boat is that?'—he was answered, '*You are in a damned hurry.*'—He hailed the second time and requested the countersign; he was answered, 'I have no countersign; I am Capt. Oliver, a citizen and gentleman—you know me.' The defendant replied that he did not know him, and ordered him on board of the guard-boat, stating, *that he only wanted him to go on board the gun-boat, and that if he was the person stated, he would not detain him long.* At this time the boats were near together. The boat in which the deceased, the son of the Capt. of the Gen. Armstrong and a negro were, pulled toward the town—the defendant ordered him back with a threat to fire into the boat if he refused—the deceased replied, 'Fire and be d-----d!' The defendant then *snapped a pistol* at the boat, which did not go off; another, was handed to him, but he did not attempt to fire again. There was considerable altercation between the parties. At this time another guard-boat came up, the commander of which, on enquiring the cause, was informed by capt. Evans that here was a man that refused to come on board the guard-boat—the commander of the last mentioned boat then ordered the deceased on board—he replied he would be d-----d if he would come on board, at the same time taking up a shingle as one witness stated, an oar as was stated by another, and swore he would knock down the first man that should attempt to lay hold of his painter; upon this the commander of the last mentioned boat struck him several times with the *flat* part of his cutlass; during this altercation the painter of Oliver's boat was made fast to one of the guard-boats, and was towed alongside of the nearest gun-boat; the defendant immediately went on board the gun-boat, leaving his arms in the stern sheets of the guard-boat; Oliver's boat being near the guard-boat, he seized one of the pistols and cried out, 'Now fire! I am armed as well as you;' at this moment the deceased was struck on the arm with an oar, whether by accident or design did not appear in evidence; he immediately turned around and discharged a pistol—one of the boat's crew instantly fell overboard, and it was generally supposed that he was shot, and word was given on board the gun-boat to fire, which was immediately done by M'Chesney's discharging a musket, the ball of which entered the left breast of the deceased, who exclaimed murder! murder! and immediately expired. The prosecutor proved that Evans acknowledged that he gave the order to fire; however this fact was admitted by the defendant's counsel.

Gautier was called as a character witness and Evans could have asked none better. He testified:

That as well from his own knowledge, as from the information derived from the officers of the navy under whom the defendant served, that he was of a mild, gentle and amiable disposition, with a heart teeming with benevolence, and that if he had a fault (if a fault it could be called) he was too lenient.

This seems to leave but little room for argument, but counsel for the defendant did not spare their eloquence on that account.

J. D. Toomer, esq. opened his defense; his speech exhibited a summary view of the transaction, a general but concise and able sketch of the case in flowing and select language, concluding with a fair and manly appeal to the sympathy of his hearers, which could not have failed to produce an effect favorable to the accused. John R. Loudon, esq. succeeded. He entered immediately into the field of argument; in a sympathetic, ingenious, and convincing manner, he dissected the whole case, proceeding step by step, to mark the evolvment of the different circumstances, applying with precision those only which ought to bear on the defendant, and from a consideration of which he argued with great force the necessary exculpation of the prisoner. Gen. Wm. W. James closed the defence. He rose, evidently laboring under considerable indisposition, expressing his regret that a case of so much importance should be at all dependent for support on one, at the present so little qualified to do it justice; although he did not believe his state of health would admit him to devote more than a few minutes to the defence of Mr. Evans, yet those few would be strenuously exerted in the behalf of innocence accused and endangered; he then delivered a simple and interesting narrative of all that had preceded and led to the melancholy catastrophe; he proved incontestably that no feeling rankled in the bosom of the accused, dwelt with pathetic power on his peculiar situation, on the uniform amiability of his deportment, on his gentle manner, to all his endearing kindness to those subjected to his command, the utter impossibility that he could have been actuated by any other motive than that of a sense of duty, obeying the command of a superior officer, acting in self defence and opposed by the premeditated resistance and abusive rashness of the misjudging and illfated Oliver. As the advocate proceeded, his power of argument increased, and the rising impulse of his feelings seemed to have banished, or made him forget his indisposition.

One quails at the thought of what General James might have said had he been in good health. As it was, the prosecuting attorney realized that his was a hopeless task and bowed gracefully to the inevitable.

Mr. Troy, the U. S. Attorney, closed the pleadings in a short address, replete with elegance and sensibility. While he stated the law with clearness, and urged that *at least* the defendant was guilty of the crime of aggravated manslaughter, he evinced in the necessary and faithful discharge of his official duty, a liberal and tender

spirit, that would rejoice more in the acquittal of the unfortunate Evans, than in the triumph of having gained a victory by his talents at the price of human blood.<sup>30</sup>

It is hardly necessary to say that the jury very promptly brought in a verdict of acquittal, whereupon the charges against M'Chesney were dropped.

This case had followed the course which has become all too familiar in American murder cases. First there is public sympathy for the victim and indignation against the slayer. Then as time passes there is a building up of sentimental pity for the poor criminal cruelly threatened with the penalty of death, and only the hardhearted thinks any more of the wrong done the original victim. In Oliver's case this process was hastened by the fact that he apparently was one of those troublesome individuals who insist on standing up for their rights, regardless of consequences, just as a matter of principle. If he had lived in these times, he would have argued with traffic officers. The newspaper put the matter thus:

At the time that this dreadful event took place, the tide of popular prejudice was strong against the accused; but an enquiry into the character and conduct of Mr. Evans, and a more dispassionate consideration of all the circumstances had produced so great a change in public opinion, that we are confident the verdict of acquittal met with general approbation.

It even turned out that Mr. Evans actually had nothing to do with the shooting of Oliver; he was just too good a sport to deny it.

Since the trial we have learnt that Mr. Evans did not give the order to fire. But as Mr. M'Chesney did fire under the impression that this order was given by him, he assumed it, and thus risked his own life, submitting to the harrowing situation of being arraigned at the bar of justice for the crime of murder, of which the result might have been an ignominious death. A rare instance of generous heroism, a magnanimity, which, though few imitate, all must applaud.<sup>31</sup>

## VII.

What in the meantime of Captain Sinclair? If he ever had a reply to his application to the Secretary of the Navy, he had got no satisfaction from him. Apparently he stayed on in Wilmington and went no more to sea. No doubt *General Armstrong's* cruise had been financially disastrous to him, and in view of what had occurred it would probably have been very difficult for him to find backers for another venture. At any rate, he was still

<sup>30</sup> *Wilmington Gazette* quoted in *City Gazette*, 15 November 1813.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*

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in Wilmington and still seeking for justice by a letter to James Monroe, Secretary of State, and through him to President Madison on 22 August 1814.

As the Statement of my case, as well as of the proceedings that have been had upon it, since my first arrival and application for the Arrest of the Mutinous portion of my Officers and Crew will accompany this letter, I consider it as [is?] as unnecessary, as it would be superfluous, to say more on the subject of either than the sheets I now send you Contain.

I am extremely sorry that circumstances have rendered it necessary for me, particularly at this time, to be troublesome to the Executive Magistrate of my Country, or to you. Yet I trust my Apology will be found from my present application originating in a duty, which I conceive of the highest importance, not only to me, but to my fellow Citizens at large, to enquire from what Source, the Honourable Secretary of the Navy derived the Authority to dismiss the Mutineers of the General Armstrong, after they were Arrested, without even the formality of a Court of Enquiry on their Conduct, or an examination of my books, papers, Officers or self, relative to the Circumstances of my Cruize, or the rise, progress and consequences of the Mutiny, by which means they escaped the punishment due to their Crimes and I became the Victim of the act, as I had already been of their Villanies, and they are now at liberty, each to earn his living, and exultingly boast of their evil deeds, whilst I am left as a disfranchised Citizen to suffer under the heavy losses I have sustained, still rendered more heavy and aggravated, by the redress and Justice, I had adopted Constitutional means to obtain, being withheld from me.

Constitutional authority to the act of dismissing the Mutineers, The Secretary of the Navy had not—it was a stretch of Power unprecedented in any Country, unless in Countries where Despotism is the order of the day, which leads me to believe/tho' contrary to the opinion of many/that the President, or even the Attorney General of the United States at the time, had never been Consulted as to the propriety of the measure. Political necessity there was none; I am not of Consequence enough to be the victim of such necessity on any occasion. Nor, have I ever, by any act of mine forfeited any right to political protection. Here I close my enquiry and observations for the present to await the Answer of the President and if his opinion is affirmative of mine, from him, with all the respect that is due from a faithful Citizen to the highest Executive Magistrate of his Country I now seek that redress of my grievances, and reparation for my sufferings that has heretofore been denied me, to the procuring of which, as far as your official duties lead, I rest Satisfied you will not be inattentive.<sup>32</sup>

Captain Sinclair still signed himself as 'Commander of the *Genl. Armstrong*.' Receiving no reply, he wrote again to Monroe on 4 October.

Under date of the 22d August I had the honour to address you and at same time to transmit you a file of papers relative to my Cruize &c in the General Armstrong, to

<sup>32</sup> National Archives, Records of the Department of the Navy; Records Acquired from the Department of State; Letters from Collectors of Customs Relating to Commissions of Privateers, 1812-15; Privateers, War of 1812, Vol. 5 (RG 45).

which, from the unfortunate circumstances that took place at Washington, and even before my letter could have reached it's destination, I did not look for an immediate Answer; but, as a considerable time has now elapsed, I will most humbly acknowledge the favour, if you will acquaint me if any measures have been taken relative to my concerns and what I have to expect.<sup>33</sup>

Still no reply from Monroe, though the British were no longer in Washington, and on 20 October Captain Sinclair sent him his final word.

Under date of the 23d of August last, I had the honour to address you, and at the same time I forwarded to the Department of State a file of papers in which were exhibited a detail of the most atrocious Mutiny that has ever been suffered to escape legal investigation in any Civilised and Commercial Country, and what is still more strange to tell, the perpetrators, after Arrested, were dismissed without even the formality of a Court of enquiry being had on their conduct, by the order of an Officer no less than the Secretary of the Navy of the United States of America, which, as I have before said, was an assumption of power, Extraordinary, unprecedented, and unconstitutional, and such as no man in this Country, however elevated his situation, had a right to exercise, and to add if possible, to the Injuries I have sustained, and as if to wound still deeper, my already much wounded feelings, I am, on application to the Chief Magistrate of the United States, to whom through you I have preferred my Complaint, refused even an acknowledgment of the receipt of my letters and papers.

It is true, that it was at an unfavourable moment that I first addressed you, as the enemy in a few days after my first letter &c left this, were in possession of the City of Washington, which circumstance, from the derangement that must necessarily have taken place in consequence of that most unfortunate event, I acknowledged to you in my letter of the 4th Inst. to have precluded my expectation of an immediate attention to my business, but after forty two days had elapsed, I considered an Answer of some kind was due, which consideration induced me to write you my said letter of the 4th. And now after twenty two days more have elapsed, being still without any Acknowledgment of the receipt of my case, or of either of my letters, I again, humbly, solicit you to inform me, if my said papers and letters have reached you, and if they have, to what Cause I am to impute the neglect with which I am treated by the government of my Country or it's Ministers. If in aught I have forfeited their attention or protection, It is but Justice I should be made Acquainted in what I have offended, that I may have it in my power to remove any Ill founded impression, they may have been led to entertain of my conduct, or to atone for my error, by a fair and candid acknowledgement of, and apology for the wrongs I have done, when, that I have done wrong, is fairly demonstrated. Surely Sir: such favour cannot be refused to an injured and complaining Citizen—unless the genius of Liberty has fled this land, and a Relentless Aristocracy has assumed her shape and place, in borrowed garb, to play the Tyrant in disguise.<sup>34</sup>

<sup>33</sup> National Archives, General Records of the Department of State; Miscellaneous Letters, October-December, 1814 (RG 59).

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*

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That seems to conclude the correspondence. If Captain Sinclair ever had a reply from Washington, it cannot be found among available records. The charges of mutiny were never brought to a hearing, and we shall probably never know the rights and wrongs of the matter. As we have remarked, the rebels must have thought they were right or they would not have sailed *General Armstrong* to an American port to face the American authorities. Nor would we expect four fifths of the officers and crew of a ship to rebel against a captain who had treated them with any reasonable degree of justice and fairness. We suspect that Captain Sinclair, being part owner of a ship whose voyage had been profitless, was reluctant to spend money on provisions and seized on the rumor of a British fleet in the neighborhood as an excuse to hurry out of Brava harbor when he could have taken on needed supplies, always hoping that he could replenish the larder from a prize without expense. No doubt he was a harsh, unapproachable, unbending, stiff-necked man; he sounds so. At the same time, however, we cannot but feel that he deserved better treatment than he received from his own government. He should have had a reply to his letters and he was entitled to his day in court.

#### VIII.

And finally, with all her problems settled or shelved—mutiny, *Matilda* and murder—what of *Armstrong* herself?

A dispatch from Wilmington dated 17 July 1813 mentions *General Armstrong* as in that harbor and available for its defense against a threatened British attack.<sup>35</sup> After that she seems to disappear from the news in Charleston and the Wilmington papers of the time have not survived. The Charleston papers from time to time mentioned a 'three masted boat *General Armstrong*,' sometimes referred to as a schooner, plying between Georgetown and Charleston; but this can hardly have been our ship, particularly as she is sometimes said to have taken the inland route, which would require very shallow draft.<sup>36</sup>

We should probably know nothing further of our unlucky privateer had she not ended her career in characteristic fashion, in disaster and litigation, so that her final chapter was recorded in the reports of cases decided in the Constitutional Court of South Carolina under the title of *Miller & Brown v. South-Carolina Insurance Company, et al.*, 2 McCord 336, 13 S. C. Law 133, 13 Am. Dec. 134. This was a suit to collect insurance in

<sup>35</sup> *Charleston Courier*, 23 July 1813; *City Gazette*, 23 July 1813.

<sup>36</sup> *Charleston Courier*, 15 December 1813; *City Gazette*, 30 May 1814, and 9 January 1815.

the sum of \$7,000.00 as a result of the sinking of *General Armstrong* on 12 September 1818 on a voyage from Charleston to Havana with a cargo of looking glasses and coffee boilers. She began to leak dangerously soon after leaving Charleston, apparently from the springing of a butt, and Captain Henry D. Hill, her commander, ran her inshore where she sank in four fathoms, so that some of her cargo was saved, though she was a total loss. The underwriters unsuccessfully resisted payment of the insurance upon the ground that the loss was due to unseaworthiness.

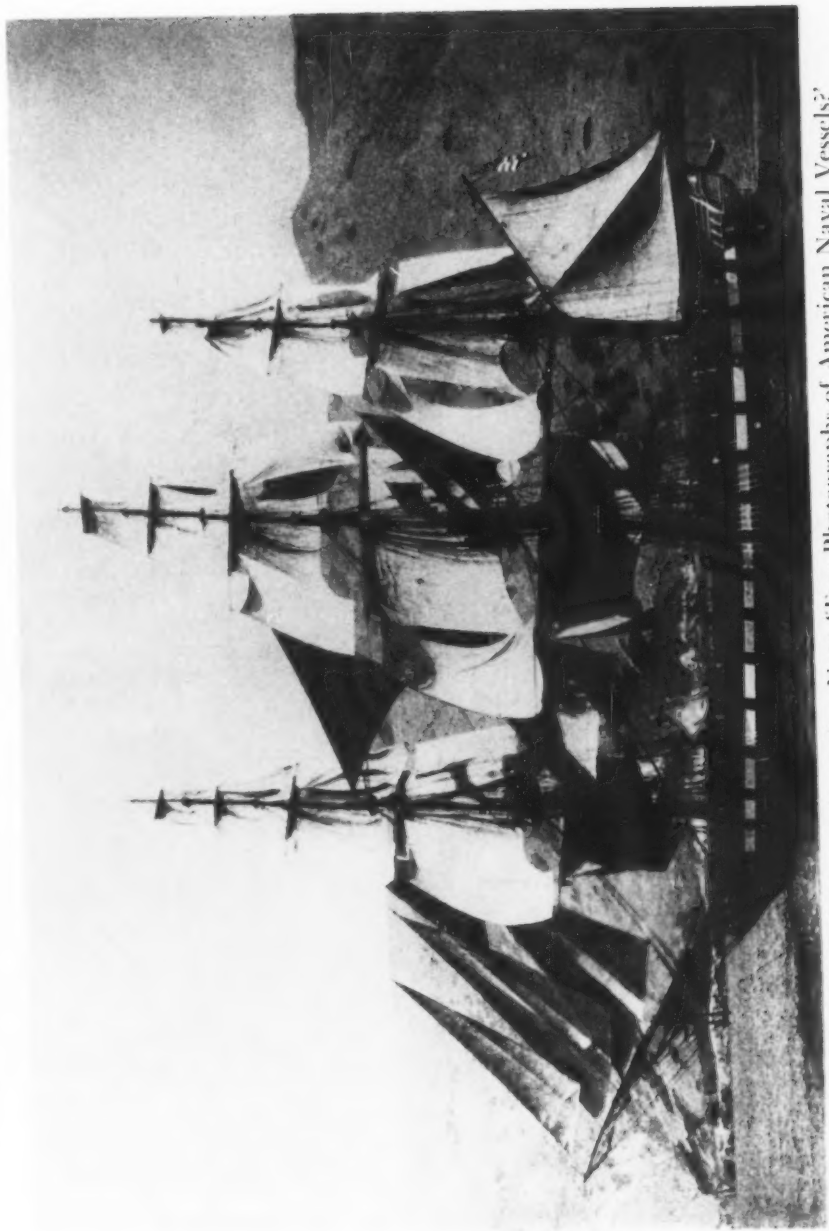
The report includes a summary of the evidence in the trial below, from which we learn a number of facts about *General Armstrong* otherwise unknown. She was French built and first came to Charleston in 1807 or 1808. She was a sharp vessel, strongly built, with an uncommonly fine frame. She was first a brig but was changed to a ship when she was being fitted out as a privateer in 1812. She had remained in Wilmington for a long time after putting in there and then lay in Chisolm's dock in Charleston for some two years before her last voyage.

One of the witnesses for the underwriters was our old acquaintance, Charles Cromwell, once Master's Mate of *General Armstrong*, who pleaded the cause of the mutineers in the *Wilmington Gazette* and came to Charleston in a whaleboat after Gautier released him and his fellows from imprisonment. He told of certain incidents in *General Armstrong's* only cruise which might have affected her seaworthiness. Eight or ten days out of Charleston in a gale of wind she sprung a bad leak 'under the lower breast hook . . . about four feet from the joining of the keel and stern.' She later had 'a sort of an engagement with a British vessel, which lasted about two or three hours.' Perhaps this was the occasion when she lost her sternboat. On her way back to the United States she was chased by the British ship *Sappho*. She grounded on Wilmington bar but was pumped out and floated on the next tide.

The plaintiff's witnesses having somewhat disparaged Cromwell's veracity, 'Mr. Charles Graves was then examined as to Mr. Cromwell's character. He said he did believe from a knowledge of his character, that he would not swear to a lie; that he thought he would rather cut off a joint of his finger than do so, and that he was always too high minded for a poor man.'

It is to be doubted that Captain Sinclair would have agreed even to this rather cynical compliment.

*Harold A. Mouzon, a member of the Maritime Law Association, is a collector of maritime books and prints and President of the Board of Trustees of the College of Charleston.*



Unidentified United States frigate. See Note "Two Photographs of American Naval Vessels?"



Unidentified United States warship. See Note "Two Photographs of American Naval Vessels?"



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# Notes

## TWO PHOTOGRAPHS OF AMERICAN NAVAL VESSELS?

THIS is a 'stump the experts' note. Two years ago Mr. Roderick Serle of Melbourne, Australia, sent to the National Archives and Records Service in Washington, D. C., two allegedly early photographs of American warships in foreign waters. The prints are from two glass negatives in a collection of some 5,000 from an old professional Australian photographer who died about 1937. They were to be stripped of their emulsion to make a greenhouse when Mr. Serle saved them. Miss Josephine Cobb of the Records Service forwarded them to us for identification.

Plate 7 shows a frigate and Plate 8 a somewhat smaller vessel. We know the identity of both ships. It has been suggested that we run the pictures to see how many of our subscribers can identify them and to place them on record. There are several clues in the above information. Here are some others. Note the crude, un-American-looking stern on the smaller ship, and the details of sails, spars, and rigging on both vessels. The answer will be in the editorial of the next issue.

ERNEST S. DODGE

## JACOB SPIN, SHIP PORTRAITIST

ONE of the lesser known ship portraitists of the mid-nineteenth century whose work is found in American collections of ship paintings is Jacob Spin of Amsterdam. The information concerning the man and his work has been supplied by E. W. Petrejus of the Maritiem Museum 'Prins Hendrick' of Rotterdam.

Jacob Spin was born in Amsterdam 24 April 1806 and died in the same city 3 June 1875. Tradition states that as a young man he was a seaman but the city records list him as a painter throughout his lifetime. Spin's method of doing business was interesting and quite modern. As soon as a vessel arrived in port he put out in a small boat and proposed painting a portrait of her for the captain. The recorded paintings by Spin are dated between 1834 and 1871 and are sailing vessels, except for a few steamers and Dutch inland craft. A curious decorative work by Spin in the Prince Hendrick Museum was painted on the occasion of his daughter's wedding; even then Spin could not abandon his interest in sailing vessels. He has painted an imaginary vessel named '*Weigel*' carrying a blue house flag charged with two compasses and a square, done in white, also a pennant with the name '*Weigel and Anna*.' The inscription below the painting reads, 'G. W. Weigel & A. Spin, 21 April 1864.'

A painting of the ship *Calypso* (1847 Maassliis) is in the Taylor Collection now at the Peabody Museum of Salem.

CHARLES H. P. COPELAND

## SOUTHERN SEA OTTERS AND THE SHIP *Hope*

LOOKING through the Pacific Ocean extracts in the Peabody Museum for notes on the early sea history of the Gilbert and Marshall Islands Samuel Eliot Morison came on this old newspaper item: 'Captain Ray and the *Hope* returned on 4th November, 1802, after a three years' voyage; he reported discovering on 22nd December, 1801, an island four leagues long, 5-41 N.; 173-40 E.'

When he sighted the island Captain Nathaniel Ray was just over a month out of Sydney N. S. W. on his way to Canton. He seems to have spent an earlier part of his voyage catching sea otters, not on the northwest coast of

America, but at the southern end of South America.

According to the Sydney shipping register (*Historical Records of Australia*, vol. III, 452) *Hope*, 269 tons, carrying eight guns and manned by twenty-six men, entered Port Jackson on 2 November 1801, from the River Plate. She was built at New Haven in 1799 and owned by Duggell and Co. of that port; the master was Nathaniel Ray. Her cargo was declared as 34,000 seal skins and 550 dozen otter skins. *Hope* cleared for China on 16 November.

She had obviously not been to the sea-otter grounds of the northwest coast. Her 6,600 otter skins presumably, then, belonged to the variety of sea otters found on the coasts of Patagonia and Tierra del Fuego. Captain Ray seems to have sold some of the otter skins in Sydney though the shipping return shows *Hope* as taking away all the 550 dozen. In April 1803 Thomas Jamison, surgeon-general of the colony, sought to send otter skins to London on H.M.S. *Glatton*. Governor King wrote to Captain H. James Colnett of *Glatton* on 17 April 1803: 'Respecting Mr Jamison's application, as the Sea Otter Skins are not the produce of this Territory I do not conceive that they can be any way considered as coming within the meaning of your orders.' It seems likely that these skins came from *Hope*.

THOMAS DUNBABIN

#### *Cleopatra's Barge*, NAVY STYLE

Mr. Whitehill's delightful article on George Crowninshield's *Cleopatra's Barge* in THE AMERICAN NEPTUNE for October 1953 recalls to mind that at one time the U. S. Navy had a similarly designated barge.

When Commander Uriah P. Levy, USN, took over command of U.S.S. *Vandalia* in November 1838, he seized upon one of the double-banked quarter boats pulling twelve oars and discarded the captain's gig, a single-banked boat pulling only six oars. Levy called her *Cleopatra's Barge*. This barge had a blue and gold streak painted around her near the water line, and a very long pennant-staff with a large brass star surmounting it was stepped in the bow when the boat left the ship. The pose of the occupant on such occasions was so pompous as to be ridiculous.

Commander Levy is best known in the Navy for his efforts to abolish flogging as punishment for seamen, but strange to relate, he was court-martialed at Baltimore in April 1842 for illegal punishment when in command of *Vandalia*. He was found guilty and sentenced to be dismissed from the service but President Tyler remitted the sentence of the court.

EDGAR K. THOMPSON, CAPTAIN, USN

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BY ROBERT GREENHALGH ALBION

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Abbreviations: *BuShips*, *Bureau of Ships Journal*; *D&HA*, *Dock and Harbour Authority*; *MCF*, *Maine Coast Fisherman*; *PLA*, *PLA Monthly* (Port of London Authority); *S&S*, *Ships and the Sea*; *SBF*, *Steamboat Bill of Facts*; *USNIP*, *United States Naval Institute Proceedings*.

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- The National Shipping Authority*, 2 pp. *Tow Line* (Moran), Aug. For more detailed account of same subject, see R. G. Albion (XIV, 70).
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- *Hearings to Facilitate Private Financing of New Ship Construction, April 9-30, 1954*, 147 pp. *Ibid.*
- *Special Subcommittee, Hearings, Study of Operations of Military Sea Transportation Service, March 26-May 18, 1954*, Pt. I, 548 pp. *Ibid.*
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- VAN HOESSEN, W. H., *A Van Santvoord Started Hudson Day Line*, 2 pp. *De Halve Maen*, April.

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- BURCHETT, MRS. THOMAS, *The Romance of the River*, 6 pp. *Filson Club Hist. Quar.*, July. Reminiscences of Ashland, Ky.
- Chicago is Growing in Importance as an Ocean Port, 3 pp. *Board of Trade Jour.*, 17 April.
- CURRY, F. C., *The St. Lawrence Canals*, 2 pp. *Inland Seas*, Fall.
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- HARRINGTON, LYN, *The Stikine River*, 10 pp. *Canadian Geog. Jour.*, Aug. Flat-bottomed river steamer from Wrangel, Alaska, through northern British Columbia to Hudson's Bay post at Telegraph Creek.
- MASON, G. C., *A List of the Vessels built at the Site of the Union Dry Dock Company Yard at Buffalo, N. Y. from 1841 to 1870*, 2 pp. *Inland Seas*, Fall. From 28 Aug. 1890 issue of *Seaboard*.
- METCALF, C. S., *The Skipper of the 'Golden Age'*, 3 pp. *Inland Seas*, Fall. Capt. Charles Hubbard of Philadelphia with salt water experience before taking command of a four-master on the lakes in 1883.
- McKELVEY, BLAKE, *The Port of Rochester*, 24 pp. *Rochester History* (Rochester Public Library), Oct.
- MYERS, R. E., *Steamboats on a One-Way River*, 9 pp. *Pennsylvania Angler*, May.
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## VIII. Seaports and Coastal Areas

- AMBLER, JOHN, see Sect. I.
- Bayway to Baton Rouge, 20 pp. *Ship's Bulletin* (Esso), July-Aug. Lighthouses and other coastal features on coastal tanker run from New York Bay to Mississippi above New Orleans; profusely illustrated.
- BLANCHARD, F. S., *A Cruising Guide to the Inland Waterway and Florida*, 270 pp. \$5.00. New York, Dodd, Mead.
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- CALVERT, R. A., *Bequia: Island Home of Many Schooners*, 3 pp. *Trident*, July. One of the Grenadines, between Grenada and St. Vincent.
- Carol and Edna Give Coast a Wicked Pounding, 3 pp. *MCF*, Oct. Effects of hurricanes of 31 Aug. and 11 Sept. 1954 along New England coast; pictures with brief comments. Similar subject in *Yachting*, Oct.
- CARTER, G. G., *Holland Revisited*, 5 pp. *Trident*, Sept. Ports and canals.
- CHUTE, W. J., *When Perth Amboy was a Seaport Town*, 17 pp. *Jour. of Rutgers Univ. Lib.*, June. Letters, 1823-39.
- The City of Lake Charles, 5 pp. *Lykes Fleet Flashes*, Aug. The Louisiana Gulf port, officially opened in 1926.
- CROTHERS, J. A., *Developments in the Delaware River*, 4 pp. *Waterways*, June.
- DOODY, JOHN, *The Gate of Weeping*, 2 pp. *Trident*, Sept. Strait between Arabia and Africa at southern end of Red Sea.
- DUMONT, CHARLES, *Gibraltar, 1704-1954*, 8 pp. *History Today*, Aug.
- FORSBERG, R. R., *USA, Portable Piers and Packaged Ports*, 5 pp. *Army Information Digest*, Sept. DeLong floating piers with caissons and other equipment.
- GOLDING, R. C., *How Kittimat Port was Built*, 2 pp. *Canadian Shipping*, Sept. 'Tremendous requirements of new B.C. harbor were met in time for opening of new smelter in August, 1954.'
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- The Humber Ports. *D&HA*, Aug., Sept. (1) General Introduction to the Series, 4 pp. Aug.; (2) The Port of Hull—Geographical and Historical Features, 6 pp. Sept. To be continued.
- Inside Passage, 6 pp. *The Lamp* (Esso), Sept. 'With cargoes bound for wilderness outposts, tankers ply the winding fiords and channels of Canada's west coast.' Includes four pages of paintings.
- MOOREHEAD, ALAN, *The Mediterranean*, 20 pp. *Holiday*, Nov. Ports, history and atmosphere.
- OSBORN, E. C., *Through the Second Doorway*, 4 pp. *Trident*, Sept. Singapore.
- Port Progress Reports. *World Ports*. 21. Delaware River Valley, July; 22. The Ports of Virginia, Aug.; 23. Boston, Sept.
- PRATT, A. M., see Sect. I.
- RICHARDS, H. G., comp., *A Book of Maps of Cape May, 1610-1878*, 28 pp. \$2.00 paper. Cape May, N. J., Cape May Geog. Soc.
- RICHARDSON, E. M., *From Norfolk to the Hawk*, 10 pp. *Dalhousie Rev.*, Autumn 1953. An account of Barrington, N. S., and its connection with Old England and New England.
- RUDZKI, ADAM, *Roads, Waterways, and Seaports of Captive Europe* (Mimeographed Series, No. 15), 24 pp. 10 cents. Mid-European Study Center.
- SCOTT, PETER, *Some Functional Aspects of Cape Town*, 17 pp. *Econ. Geog.*, Oct. Includes historical background and section on 'The Port.'
- Seaports. *The Log*, 15 Aug. Summary of new developments in the principal American ports.
- SEMMES, RAPHAEL, *Baltimore as Seen by Visitors, 1783-1860* (Studies in Maryland History, No. 2), 208 pp. \$4.00. Baltimore, Maryland Hist. Soc., 1953.
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- WOODMAN, DOROTHY, *Raffles of Java, 1781-1826*, 10 pp. *History Today*, Sept. Includes account of origins of Singapore.

### IX. Shipbuilding and Allied Topics

- BALISON, H. J., *Newport News Ships: Their History in Two World Wars*, 360 pp. \$8.00. Newport News, Mariners Museum. Records of wartime activities of more than 200 warships and merchantmen built by the Newport News Shipbuilding & Dry Dock Co.
- (DOUTY, J. F.), *More on Books of Specifications. Log Chips*, July.
- EICHLER, C. W., *Fire Protection in Merchant Ships*, 3 pp. *European Shipbuilding*, No. 2, 1954.
- FRANCIS, W. J., *The Story of Shipbottom Protective Coverings*, 3 pp. *BuShips*, Oct. Navy yard experiments since 1906.
- GARDNER, JOHN, *How to Build a 15-Foot Matinicus Peapod*, 2 pp. *MCF*, Oct.
- Gloom in the Shipyards, 4 pp. *Fortune*, July. See also *Time*, 12 July.
- Good Start for a New Shipyard, 3 pp. *Canadian Shipping*, Sept. E. B. Magee, Ltd., of Port Colborne, Ont., at Lake Erie end of Welland Canal.
- (LYMAN, JOHN), *The Shipbuilders of Bath, Maine*. V. William Rogers; VI. Deering and Donnell, 4 pp. *Log Chips*, July.
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### X. Naval to 1939—North America

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- BANNERMAN, JAMES, *The Last Run of the 'I'm Alone'*, 4 pp. *Macleans*, 1 Jan. Sinking of Canadian-registered rumrunner by U. S. Coast Guard, 27 March 1929, leading to international incident.
- The Battle of the Barges, 5 pp. *Va. Cavalcade*, Autumn. Action of Virginia and Maryland 'gentlemen volunteers' against British privateers in Chesapeake Bay near Tangier Sound, 29 Nov. 1782.
- (BELCHER, SIR EDWARD, RN), *Royal Navy Ships on the Columbia River in 1839*, ed. G. M. Douglas, 4 pp. *The Beaver*, Autumn. Surveying expedition under Belcher visited Fort Vancouver.
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- (CLINTON, SIR HENRY), *The American Revolution: Sir Henry Clinton's Narrative of his Campaigns, 1775-1782, with an Appendix of Original Documents*, ed. W. B. Willcox, 658 pp. \$7.50. Yale. Includes considerable naval material; see Index under Navy, American; Navy, British; Navy, French; and Navy, Spanish.
- DURKIN, J. T., *Stephen R. Mallory: Confederate Navy Chief*, 457 pp. \$6.00. Chapel Hill, U. of N. C. Press. Biography of Jefferson Davis's Secretary of the Navy, formerly chairman of Senate Naval Affairs Committee.
- E.E.S. Celebrates its 50th Anniversary, 6 pp. *BuShips*, Aug. U. S. Naval Engineering Experiment Station at Annapolis.
- Famous Ships of the Port of New York. *Via Port of New York*. Captain Allen's \$2,500,000 Cruise—The 'Argus,' Aug.; The Boast that Back-Fired—The 'United States,' Sept.
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### XI. Naval to 1939—Other Regions

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- BELLAIRS, R. M., RN, Historical Survey of Trade Defence since 1914, 20 pp. *United Service*, Aug.
- CRAMP, K. R., The Recognition of Governor Arthur Philip in England, 9 pp. *Royal Australian Hist. Soc. Jour. & Proc.*, Oct. 1953. British naval officer who commanded first convict expedition and became first governor of New South Wales.
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 — Dutch Reverses in Malabar, 1658-1660, 12 pp. *Ibid.*, April 1954.  
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## XII. World War II

- BALDWIN, H. W., 'Most Dramatic Sea Battle of History,' 7 pp. *N. Y. Times Magazine*, 24 Oct. Leyte Gulf.  
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## XIII. Postwar Naval

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## XIV. Marine Art, Ship Models, Collections, Exhibits

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- Mystic Seaport, 2 pp. *Rudder*, Sept. 12 photographs.
- NATIONAL MARITIME MUSEUM, *Portraits at the National Maritime Museum, Series I, 1570-1748*, 32 pp. 50 cents. London, HMSO. Principally portraits of naval officers; 28 plates.
- Naval Uniforms from Nelson's Day to the Present Time, on Show at the National Maritime Museum, Greenwich. *Illustrated London News*, 25 Sept. Illustrations of 12 of the 32 uniforms on display.
- U. S. NAVAL ACADEMY MUSEUM, *Catalogue of the Henry Huddleston Rogers Collection of Ship Models*, 117 pp. \$2.00 cloth, \$1.50 paper (\$1.30 and \$1.20, respectively, to members). Annapolis, U. S. Naval Institute.

## XV. Bibliography

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